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ABSTRACT

Schools and colleges fail to meet many of the needs of young people in the transition from school to adult working life. For many, schooling offers the 3Ds--disqualification, demotivation, and dependence. At all levels, there is a lack of challenge. Present proposals in vocational preparation largely fail to deal with these fundamental problems of schooling, and pay too little attention to the real problems of young people, including unemployment. Vocational preparation is ill-thought out, narrowly aimed at the "less able," and lacks a coherent and comprehensive rationale. These are the conclusions of a Working Group brought together by the Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit, Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow. The group argues for "transition learning," which provides a rationale based on personal and social development. Transition learning identifies learning procedures and contexts that develop in young people a sense of responsibility, autonomy, and solidarity. It unites these aims with the promotion of technical or academic competencies. Transition learning aims to help young people to become more creative, more critical, and more productive. This report presents the case for transition learning and suggests ways to implement it in school systems. Examples from various countries are used to support the plan. (KC)

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CROSSING THE THRESHOLD: TRANSITION LEARNING IN "VOCATIONAL PREPARATION"

This report is produced by a Working Group brought together by the Scottish Vocational Preparation Unit (SCOVO), Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow. The group examine developments in vocational preparation and youth training. They argue that:

Schools and colleges fail to meet many of the needs of young people in the transition from school to adult working life. For many, schooling offers the 3Ds - disqualification, demotivation and dependence. At all levels, there is a lack of challenge.

Present proposals in vocational preparation largely fail to deal with these fundamental problems of schooling, and pay too little attention to the real problems of young people, including unemployment. Vocational preparation is ill-thought out, narrowly aimed at the "less able", and lacks a coherent and comprehensive rationale.

Transition Learning provides a rationale based on personal and social development. It identifies learning procedures and contexts which develop in young people a sense of responsibility, autonomy and solidarity. It unites these aims with the promotion of technical or academic competencies. Transition Learning aims to help young people to become more creative, more critical, and more productive.

August 1983

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*The report represents part of the final reporting strategy of the External Evaluation of the Clydebank EEC Project, 1978-82. The External Evaluation aims principally to contribute to national debate on issues relevant to its findings, rather than to produce formal summative reports.**

The contribution of the Evaluation to this report should be seen in terms of input to the group, facilitation, and reporting. The group themselves have no connection with the evaluation of the Clydebank Project. Nor should that Project be seen as formally associated with this report.

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Further copies are available from:

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* other final reports of the evaluation include:

"Assessment in Youth Training: made-to-measure?" Working group report Feb. 1982 (£1.00)

"Once Upon a Timetable. Final Evaluation Report on the Clydebank EEC Project" Ian Stronach, A.D. Weir Feb. 1983 (free)

"Transition Tutor: a teacher's account of the role" George Roberts May 1983 (free)

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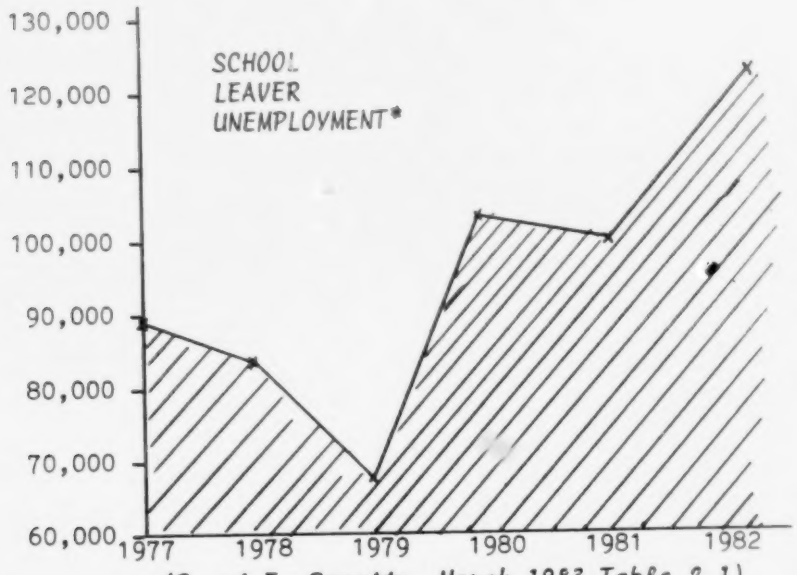
1. INTRODUCTION

This year, more than half a million young people will pass through "youth training" courses run by the Manpower Services Commission, or through similar "school-leaver" courses run by secondary schools. These "vocational preparation" courses for 15-18 year olds are the biggest growth area in education and training in the UK.

But most of these young people will also experience the futility and boredom of unemployment, the stress of pursuing scarce jobs, and the frustration of having to settle for what they can get - in terms of further education, and training, as well as jobs. For them, there will be no certainty of jobs, let alone vocations, for which to prepare. And for many, the transition to adult and working life will seem little more than a shift from the pointlessness of school to the hopelessness of unemployment - from one kind of waiting to another. These are the facts:



(D. of E. Gazette March 1983 Table 2.1)

* (excluding YOP and those who get, but subsequently lose, a job)

If these are the realities of the 1980's, how suitable are our present ideas of "vocational preparation"? What contribution can education and training make? What changes must be made? This report examines these questions by looking at key weaknesses in our educational institutions and "vocational preparation" courses. It argues that "vocational preparation" is an obsolete and misleading term. The problems of the 1980's require a broader and more radical notion that can face the changing definitions of work. The report promotes the idea of Transition Learning.

Transition Learning is concerned with:

- *promoting the personal and social development of all young people*
- *giving responsibility to learners that will reflect and promote status changes (pupil → worker; child → adult; minor → citizen)*
- *starting from the realities of young people's lives and prospects in the 1980s*
- *devising learning procedures that promote responsibility, autonomy and solidarity, in addition to offering technical or academic competence*

Transition Learning, therefore, is a mixture of educational goals (skills, knowledge), and social goals (changes in status, power, and relationships). Unlike vocational preparation, it is as concerned for the skills of the future entrepreneur as for the employee; and it is aimed at creating a politically active and socially concerned citizen.

Nor are the possibilities for Transition Learning restricted to the 16-18 year old. They apply equally to other transitions where learning

needs and status changes coincide - returning to work, retirement, second careers.

The Working Group do not claim that Transition Learning is a new idea - most of the individual criticisms and procedures outlined here are familiar to tutors. But it is time to acknowledge the narrowness of "vocational preparation", and to find a more appropriate rationale for the 1980's.

"Sounds great, but how do you make it happen?" There is an embarassing gap between fine words and good practice in education. It is not possible, especially in a short report like this, to give universal prescriptions for Transition Learning since curriculum, outcomes and methods have to be negotiated with young people in terms of their prior experiences, their interests, and local circumstances. But we have tried to be specific enough about procedures and outcomes to suggest that Transition Learning is not pie in the sky.

Finally, the Working Group met ten times between April 1982 and April 1983. Given the time available to us, we have been over-ambitious, and all that we can offer in this report is a brief argument against the present and a sketch for the future. But we make no apology for that since it is the scale of the problem facing young people in the 1980's that dictates the scope of our response.

2. TRANSITION LEARNING

A. TRANSITION LEARNING: WHAT IS IT?

In this report Transition Learning[1] refers to school-to-work contexts and the knowledge and experiences relevant to those changes of status:

CONTEXT	STATUS
school → work unemployment training further education	pupil → worker adult citizen

The simplest and most familiar example of how effectively Transition Learning can work is the school-based Work Experience, where the temporary change of status (to that of worker) can promote all sorts of social, vocational and motivational spin-offs. More systematic attempts at Transition Learning may involve:

for the tutor	for the student
. learning how and when to let the learner take some control	. taking responsibility, discussing how to take learning risks
. handling the role of learning manager, rather than expert	. negotiation and learner-centred education
. establishing core learning procedures, and negotiating an agreed curriculum	. the development and use of general competencies, critical knowledge, and technical skills and information
. taking into account the learner's prior experiences and interests	. developing self and social awareness - personal development as part of social development
. taking learning risks	. the ability to reflect on experiences
. setting up situations which demand real responsibilities from the learner	. the ability to transfer skills from one context to another.

Here is the outcome of a more systematic attempt. It is not typical, but it shows an unusually successful version of this kind of development:

> *Elizabeth did badly at secondary school. Teachers thought she was bright enough, but her promise faded into truancy and indifference. By the age of 15 she was "non-certificate", except for a possible 'O' in Art. She joined a special vocational preparation course and became interested in making jewellery. She ordered materials herself, and taught 2 other girls to assemble the jewellery. It became a small business with sales made within the school, and Elizabeth became highly motivated. She was offered a job in a local Craft shop and recently set up her own small business.*
>
> *(teacher)*

The account is central to the idea of Transition Learning expressed in this report. It brings together what is wrong with school (in the eyes of Elizabeth and many others), and the kinds of change that active, challenging courses can bring about. There is, of course, meant to be no implication in that account that Transition Learning can solve youth unemployment. What it can do is help create a better motivated, educated and trained youth. The question of jobs is an economic, not an educational, problem.

B. WHY SHOULD SUCH A PROCESS BE RE-LABELLED TRANSITION LEARNING, RATHER THAN "VOCATIONAL PREPARATION"?

The idea of vocational preparation has a number of weaknesses, and transition learning a number of advantages:

"Vocational Preparation": Weaknesses

(i) "Vocational Preparation" is about preparing for work in a period when there are too few jobs and, arguably, too much "preparation". It is too narrow and euphemistic a label.

(ii) It has usually come to mean separate and inferior courses for the "less able" or the "unskilled". Often "vocational preparation" is aimed principally at the potentially unemployed. Those most likely to get jobs are least likely to get vocational preparation.

(iii) It has been based on set syllabuses, or compulsory checklists, and has been largely concerned with "relevant" information, and the

(iv) In the mid 1970's MSC - along with the UK education ministries - saw vocational preparation as a move away from personal development. Now they see it as a move towards personal development. The term has been used inconsistently, and now means almost anything.

(v) It could be said, with some justice, that vocational preparation was what we needed and didn't do in the early 1970's: and it's what we do, and don't need, in the early 1980's.

"Transition Learning": Advantages

(i) Transition Learning has an equal concern for social as well as vocational development. It is not based on a narrow "preparation for work" rationale, but on the whole process of socialization.

(ii) It is a comprehensive educational policy, and is not preoccupied with separate remedies for allegedly deficient target groups. It is concerned for social development rather than social control.

(iii) It is based on core learning procedures rather than set curricula, and is more concerned with process than content.

(iv) It takes the young people's interests and needs as its starting point, rejecting the notion that all young people have the same needs for "basic skills" or the same lack of "employability".

(v) Many vocational preparation rationales since 1980 have moved towards much broader personal and social goals. They have - in all but name - left "vocational preparation" behind. The Scottish Certificate in Vocational Studies may prove to be a good example of this kind of shift from content to process, set syllabus to negotiation; from a concern for occupational skills to a much broader social concern. Transition Learning encompasses these broader goals.

C. AREN'T WE DOING TRANSITION LEARNING ALREADY?

Some of the ideas and methods of Transition Learning can be seen in contemporary youth training and social education programmes, as the

following table shows:[2]

	PUBLICATIONS/INITIATIVES	TYPICAL PROCEDURES
1	Bristol Rosla Project	take reponsibility for own learning, negotiate, participate, facilitate, enable
2	Outward Bound Mini-companies	self-discover, experiential learning, realizing/actualizing potential
3	Unified Vocational Preparation TSD. Transition to Working Life Project, Grubb Institute How do I learn? FEU	process, reflection, induction, counselling, pedagogy, self-assessment, experiential learning, personal development, negotiation
4	Trainee Centred Reviewing, Leeds CCDU Tutoring, FEU Learning in Action, NYB	student-centred, negotiation, discussion, counselling
5	Active Learning. A Guide, FEU Springboard Shannon SPIRAL Project Community Industry	experiential learning, learning managers, Work Experience, Community Service, Social Action
6	Social and Life Skills, MSC. Pilot Social and Vocational Skills, SED Foundation Training Issues, IMS	Social and Life Skills, personal development, Social Education, soft skills, survival or coping skills, transfer skills, competencies

Running through these sometimes conflicting and vague prescriptions is a developmental strand. It concerns a core of learning procedures and social relationships that brings together educational and training needs, and contexts of learning which respect and promote social status changes. That core can be seen in the work of C. and M. Ball, of White and Brockington, and in the Grubb Institute's "working coach" model. It is a central theme in Hargreaves' recent book on the future of the comprehensive school. It is the framework around which 'quality' youth training can be built.

In giving this brief explanation of Transition Learning we have raised - but not answered - numerous practical issues. We should register them. They are issues we will return to in a later section of the report.

- *what does Transition Learning mean in practice?*
- *how do you use the external transition experiences of young people in a vocational preparation course?*
- *how do you link the curriculum and the social context of learning?*
- *what do terms like "taking risks", negotiation, student-centred learning and all the rest of it really mean?*

References and notes:

1. Perhaps the most interesting analytical account of Transition Learning is to be found in Urie Bronfenbrenner's "The ecology of human development. Experiments by nature and design" Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP 1979. In the UK, a more sociological account has been published by David Hargreaves: "The Challenge for the Comprehensive School. Culture, curriculum and continuity" London: RKP 1982.

2. (i) Bristol Rosla Project - see White R, Brockington D. "In and Out of School" London: RKP, 1978; "Tales of School" ibid.; and "Implementing the 14-18 Curriculum: new approaches. A discussion document" D. Brockington, R. White, R. Pring, YES/ Bristol Social Education Project/Schools Council, 1983.

   (ii) mini-companies - see for example, "The Mini-Company Kit" E. Bray Longmans (forthcoming)

   (iii) Unified Vocational Preparation - for example, "UVP. It Works if You Do!" Jordanhill UVP Group, Jordanhill College of

Education, Glasgow, June 1982

Transition to Working Life - "Supporting young people in transition to working life. TWL network in practice" Grubb Institute 1981

"How do I learn?" FEU, December 1981

(iv) Trainee Centred Reviewing - "Trainee Centred Reviewing. Helping trainees to help themselves" B. Pearce et.al. MSC Research and Development Series 2, November 1981

Tutoring - "Tutoring. The guidance and counselling role of the tutor in vocational preparation" J. Miller, FEU/NICEC 1982

Learning in Action - "Learning in Action. A framework for social education in the youth opportunities programme" D. Spragg, NYB, Leicester, 1981; See also the NYB Enfranchisement Project, 1982.

(v) Active Learning - "Active Learning. A guide to current practice in experiential and participatory learning" FEU December 1979

Shannon SPIRAL Project - Curriculum Development Centre, St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, Shannon, County Clare, Eire.

(vi) Social and Life Skills - "Developing Social and Life Skills. Strategies for tutors" FEU 1980

Social and Vocational Skills at Foundation Level, Scottish Education Dept., 1980-83

Foundation Training Issues - "Foundation Training Issues" C. Hayes et.al. IMS Report No. 39, University of Sussex, Feb. 1982.

3. SCHOOLS: WHAT GOES WRONG

Who needs Transition Learning? Or any of the other Social Education, Personal Development, Social and Life Skills formulae? Aren't these just fancy names for growing up? On what basis can it be claimed that schools, or other institutions, aren't already doing a good job? What inadequacies are claimed, and on what evidence? These questions are the focus for this chapter.

It is accepted that schools play a successful role for many of their clients in the "cognitive" area - in terms of basic skills, subject learning and so on. But it is argued here that schooling does badly in the "affective" area - in terms of the experiences and feelings of its clients. Schools therefore offer their clients, at the same time, a mixture of education and deprivation, of enabling and disabling. And the latter often gets in the way of the former - hence the "under-achievers", some of the "late developers", and the fact that intelligent, articulate pupils can be found in the "bottom" classes of every school. Hence also the dependent learners in higher education. The system of qualifications, the kinds of dependent behaviour expected of pupils, and the passive nature of the learning environment are the root causes of the failure of "affective" education.

A. WHAT DO THE CUSTOMERS SAY?

The social and developmental aims of schooling are well summarised in the Scottish Munn Report.[1] The left-hand side of the table illustrates some of those central intentions:

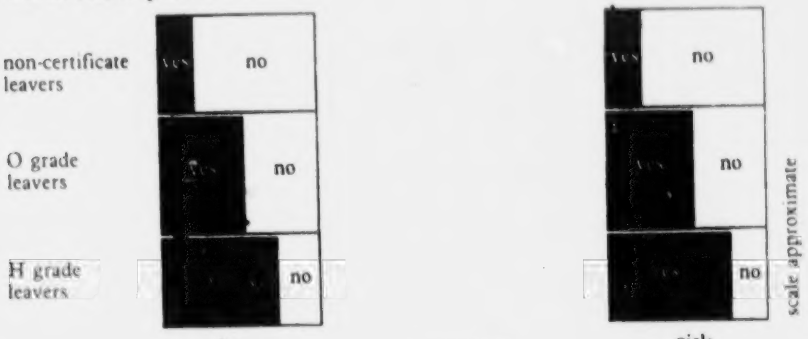
Intended Outcomes of School*	Actual Outcomes**
knowledge and understanding of self	lack of self-awareness
understand society	failure to connect education with life
interpersonal skills	destroys confidence
emotional and moral development	neglects self-discipline;stunts growth
effective membership of the community	promotes passivity and apathy; and a hierarchic view of society
enrichment of young people's lives	fails to engage the concerns of young people; impoverishes young people's lives
commitment to democratic way of life	offers authoritarian patterns of rule; stunts decision-making abilities
willingness to learn	creates dependent learners
growing maturity	retards maturity; inhibits initiative and self-reliance

* *based on the 1977 "Munn Report"*

** *based on Gow and McPherson; Hargreaves op.cit.; Clydebank External Evaluation data.*[2]

The right hand column tells a different story. How true is it? Certainly, there are many thousands of youngsters leaving school in the UK who would deny almost every item. But most of them have succeeded at school in gaining qualifications - school was worthwhile and relevant because it "qualified" them. Even for them, we can ask: but what of the intrinsic value of school for them - how much of the left hand column did they get for their 3 Highers or 2 'A' levels? As for the rest, who gained no such advantage, they are the ones who have described themselves as the "flung aside, forgotten children."[3]

Table 2: 'On the whole, do you feel that your last year at school was worthwhile? yes/no'*



percentages

	boys			girls		
	sat H	sat O	non SCE	sat H	sat O	non SCE
yes	74	52	23	77	53	22

* In the non-SCE version of the questionnaire the question was shorter: 'Was your last year at school worthwhile?'

The most recent figures show that in Scotland 2 out of 3 "non-certificate" leavers are critical of their final year at school[4] - altogether, about 50,000 dissatisfied customers every year. The following table illustrates how some of these pupils - and the "more able" - express their disappointment:

fail to connect education with life[5]	"but that [subject's] no' really important, that's just sort of discussion what life's a' aboot, and a' that." "There's no point in producing socially aware people if you can't get a job because social awareness does not buy food and houses"[a] "There's no point in us stayin' on because we're no' really intelligent - we're no' gettin' 'O' grades." "At school all is geared to passing exams. Could more time be given to character building?"[b] "Stupid men come to talk to us about parliament, as if we're interested. We're no' really interested in a' the parliament an' a' that."
fail to connect education with work	"We're sittin' in the class wi' the boys and the boys say we're sooks, 'cos we're daein' the work an' all that. We're trying to get a certificate - look at thae snobs ..." "There's nothin' to dae really, I mean, is there? I mean, you really need higher levels to get anywhere. You need 2 'O' levels to dae street cleaning." ".. so I feel my last year of School was totally useless, it just wasted a whole year of my life"[c] "I mean, you don't work in school, I mean you dae writin' and things like that, but you're no' workin'." "I was thrown into something which I did not understand"[d] "Mr X says that that's all we're good for, going out and sitting about and signing the buroo (...) we've got jobs and - you know, after school, - pizza factory - we work from half four to half seven every night .."
fail to develop confidence, self-worth etc.	"The thing is that [if] you're, like, in the 'O' levels, then you're treated OK, but when you're in a group like this now, and they think that you're much lower down than the rest of the groups in the 'O' levels (...) you're just brushed aside as dopey - cannae even count, you're thrown away." ".. if you were in a low class you were treated like dirt"[e] "[the teachers] made me feel thick really stupid so I did not bother to study, they made me feel as if it was not worth my while thinking of what I wanted to be." "I know how the teachers think o' us - we're all duddies. It's no' funny. It's the truth isn't it. We're all classed as screwballs."
promote passive and dependent learners	"Monday morning - books out, same stuff as usual." "I like, you know, workin' when I want to work. I could sit and do a lot of writing if I was to copy if aff o' somethin'. But I hate to sit and think aboot things." "Say you're sittin' in a class and you're no' allowed to talk. That teacher's bad. Just sit there quiet a' day. Couldn't go through wi' that. You need a teacher that'll let you talk. If you get caught talkin' you're a bad yin and you get flung oot the door." "So I just wrote: in this subject I learned how to write faster" "You go into his class and he's terrible for treating you like a big baby. He's terrible - he thinks you're still in primary school the way he rabbits on to you, you know."

fail to engage the concerns of young people	"I feel that school is not personal enough and tends to revolve round disciplining the pupils."[f] "Most of the teachers talk about the same thing - that's their subject. The guys at work talk about a' different sorts of things." "The rest just treat us as weans. There's this film we've to see an' it's aboot havin' babies and we've to take it doon [a permission slip] an' get it signed. Take a letter hame! My dad just laughed."
retard maturity	"Plus you get treated like a wean. That's all they do. They just go 'you're still a wean. I'll treat you like a wean.' That's all you ever get." "I did not like school because the teachers did not consider the pupils as adult"[g] "If you get treated as an adult, you act like one. Obviously you're going to act like one. But in school, you know, you're with your mates - you can sort of clown around."
create conflicting contents and processes of learning	"She switches on and off like a light" (...) "The teacher expects us to be bad behaved, so we are. Soon as she comes in she must think to herself 'oh well I'm going to be in for a rough time here.' She must (...) We're readin' a story called Kes - everybody expects him to be bad so he is bad. And that's the way she treats us (...) That's what she tells us one day, then she does it the next." "And then when he tells you things and you don't understand - you're too scared to tell in case he starts to shout and bawl at you so we don't really know very much in politics and everything, I mean, that's what we get in his class.."
offer inappropriate learning methods	"And I have learned more in the year I left school than I ever did at school by going out and doing them."[h] "I think [he] would be good if it wasn't so borin' (...) he does know what he's talkin' aboot" (...) but we jist dinnae understand whit he's talkin' aboot" (...) But he's a good teacher, but if he could, if he sort of spoke more the way we speak, do you know what I mean." "You could sit the whole day an' he'd discuss the one thing. He wouldn't even stop for breath (...) His goes in dead long. You think you're sittin' there for hours. If you ask him one question he gives you the answer to twenty."
be seen as deskilled labour by pupils	"[School's] alright. It keeps you oot o' the hoose 'cos if you're in the hoose all day you get bored. If you sit in the hoose all day you get bored stupid in front of the telly all the time." ".. when you're workin' at school all you're really doing in school is writing". "Aye, you've got tae write for hours and hours in the school but in Work Experience you're always aboot, doing something." ".. you don't like daein' the work in the school, 'cos you're writing all the time and at work you're usually working with a machine and you're no' always working with the same thing all the time. In school you are - daein' the same book, the same kind of stuff and all that."

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How representative is that collection of opinions? Much of it is paralleled in the large sample survey conducted through the Scottish Education Data Archive by Gow and McPherson. That survey is national; these are some of the dominant negative themes and outcomes. They offer, therefore, a necessary starting point for curricular innovation concerned with the social and personal development fundamental to Transition Learning.

This account rests heavily on how young people see schools and education. It could be argued that these views may be inaccurate and that skill teaching does not depend on atmosphere or relationships. But in Transition Learning, or Personal Development, or Social Education, the young person's view of himself or his situation has got to come first. There can be no other starting point. It can also be argued that if the developmental side of things is right, then the motivation to acquire knowledge and skills can be completely transformed - "ability" is a much more relative word than the psychologists and educationalists often allow. Consider the views of this deputy head, after an "Understanding British Industry" attachment to Nairn Floors Ltd.:

> *I saw young men with no educational qualifications tending complicated machinery, where a single mistake could prove very expensive. I saw others, men and women, again without 'O' grades, operating micro-processor and computer keyboards with ease and confidence. I realise that in school we tend to underestimate the responsibilities that can be accepted, and to undervalue the contribution that can be made by those we regard at present as "less able" pupils. This attitude must change. A better understanding of the needs of industry might lead us to a better understanding of many of our pupils.*

So what goes wrong in secondary school? From the point of view of the goals of Transition Learning there seem to be two central problems.* They concern the system of certification and assessment, the passive and dependent role of the learner in most school contexts, and the consequent meaninglessness of education to many young people. It is to these that we now turn.

B. DISQUALIFICATION

The single greatest obstacle to the social and personal development of young people is the system of assessment. Our education system does not develop "talents" (in the modern sense) so much as it counts them (in the Biblical sense). Schools "qualify" and "disqualify" people though sorting procedures. These can be based on examinations, on gender, or on internal divisions like "streaming". However it is done, tiers of "ability" and "worth" are created. They form - for the majority - a potent contradiction of Transition Learning - an experience of failure that acts as a demotivating rehearsal for an unskilled future. The following extract shows how powerful the system of "disqualification" can be:

> *The pupil evidence from a Transition to Work Foundation course for S4 pupils suggests that*
>
> . *even if a Foundation course is well resourced and supported*

* We acknowledge that these are simplified and condensed statements of the "problems".

. *even if pupils approve of the course*

. *even if course objectives aim centrally at motivation and self-esteem*

. *even if the course offers external certification by a nationally recognised validating body*

pupils will still evaluate the course predominantly in terms of what the rest of the pupils get. They will recognise the normalizing function of the school: how it ranks, qualifies and disqualifies. They will interpret the course as an assessment in itself, and as a form of exclusion. They will keep that verdict separate from their liking for their teachers, or enjoyment of the course.

The course may therefore accentuate the positive. What it will not be albe to do - given a hierarchy of courses - is eliminate the negative. The indications clearly are that the normalizing function of the school acts as a much more potent form of assessment than do Project school assessment policies. Self-esteem cannot be generated principally within the "positive economy" of the Foundation course and its assessment policies.

(Clydebank External Evaluation)

The danger in Scotland is that any division of educational outcomes at 16 into Credit, General and Foundation ("overlaps" notwithstanding) will create social and educational divisions that will contradict many of the "affective" goals both of Transition Learning and of the Munn/Dunning Development Programme itself. Similar dangers exist in England and Wales, especially with the development of separate "technical" types of education.

This confusion between helping and developing, and labelling and sorting pupils, lies at the heart of "grade related criteria," the hybrid notion underpinning Munn/Dunning developments, and also some of the YOP and YTS profiling schemes. An analysis of the language and ideas in a pilot Munn/Dunning course illustrates this point. The table

shows how two "languages" are used. Each language points towards different and conflicting aims and methods. One set points to the progress and development of the individual, measured against her or his past performance. The other set is comparative, and implies a quite different kind of curriculum and assessment:

INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS (ipsative*)	COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE (normative*)
enrich lives	differentiation
needs of the individual	moderation
freedom to create	national standards
personal and social growth	curricular balance
learning encounters	departmental aims/content etc.
extend pupils	pace of learning
personal development	levels of difficulty
pupil-centred	overlap
social development	depth of learning

(Foundation English Pilot)

The mixture of grade and criterion looks like this:[6]

Purpose 6: To enjoy and obtain enrichment from a message.

GRADE 6	GRADE 4/5	GRADE 2
The candidate will make a bald statement about some aspect of the message that has affected him.	The candidate will attempt to develop a statement about those aspects of the message that have affected him.	The candidate will give a succinct and detailed account of what he has enjoyed in and/or gained from the message.

* "Ipsative" is an unusual word, but a useful one. It means measuring or recording performance on the basis of an individual's progress. 'Normative' refers to comparisons of performances between learners.

Purpose 1: To convey information.

GRADE 6	GRADE 5	GRADE 2
The candidate will convey information in a fairly orderly sequence, with some sense of relevance.	**The candidate will convey information in an orderly sequence with few digressions.**	**The candidate will select relevant information and highlight what is most significant.**

The dominance of the comparative dimension is apparent in these descriptors. The difficulties of creating intermediate descriptors (1, 3, 4, 7) can be imagined. The problems of relating such descriptors to clear and specific criteria have yet to be resolved. These problems of imprecision make this assessment innovation peculiarly susceptible to the kind of drift that typically separates the intentions of a reform from its effects. It is clearly the intention that "grade-related criteria" should not be used to create segregated populations of Credit, General and Foundation pupils. The assessment system is now designed so that pupils may eventually find their own level of performance (between 1 and 7), not so that they can be initially allocated to appropriate levels of course. Those who parody the system - as in the following example - are clearly wrong.[7] The problem is that such a parody may misunderstand the intentions of the reform, but understand only too well the school system and how it will accommodate such a reform:

Credit: *I say, "I did it."*
General: *I say, "I done it."*
Foundation: *It wisnae me.*

Credit: *In examinations I write down what the teacher said.*
General: *In exams I copy down what he wrote.*
Foundation: *In exams I show the janny how to work the tape-recorder.*

Credit: *I think working hard at school is the passport to success in later life.*
General: *I think working hard at school will help me to get a better job.*
Foundation: *Ah'm no daein' it.*

In the area of "vocational preparation" and youth training many current proposals for assessment are based on some version of "grade-related criteria". They offer descriptions of a performance, and allocate a grade. City and Guilds offers 5 levels - from "Basic" to "High" - and FEU suggests 1-4 grading. Each system hopes to positively assess and to move from grades to criteria (i.e. levels of performance). Leaving aside the technical weaknesses of these proposals, they are likely to demotivate and label learners rather than encourage them.[8] How many will strive for a 'Basic' when the system shows that to be the "bottom" grade? Such systems offer <u>negative</u> Transition Learning that contradicts their own course goals. In effect they offer - however unintentionally and obliquely - a system of graduated failure where the only difference is that old fashioned grades and numbers (32%, "C") are translated into new-fangled "descriptors" whose adverbs and adjectives ("adequately", "more complex", "basic") are just as unclear and normative as were grades: the same thing, in other words. For the majority, they represent another attempt to persuade them to go up the down staircase.

Finally, they will do nothing to break down - in the minds of the learners - the present caste system that cements notions of ability and social class together:

how 'less able' pupils describe 'more able' pupils	how teachers describe 'able' pupils
brainy spoks snobs tubes think they're higher up poofs swots	more able academic talented gifted intelligent "got it" appreciative

(Clydebank External Evaluation)

Pupils' accounts are full of words, phrases and assumptions that conflate social status with educational potential, and dismiss all learning as ingratiation.

Such descriptions can be dismissed, of course, as "sour grapes" on the part of the unsuccessful and disaffected. But perhaps we ought to consider carefully the reasons why pupils often choose to describe intelligence or academic achievement in social class terms. Certainly, it seems to point to divisions in the school that reflect divisions in society. Equally certain, there is little point in idealistic course goals concerning personal or social development which are undermined from the start by the structures of the assessment system. "Self-worth" and the status of "sawdust from ear to ear" do not go easily together.

C. EXTENDED CHILDHOOD

The second important obstacle in the way of Transition Learning in our educational institutions concerns the passive and dependent nature of learning and the consequences for the motivation of the learner. Long after other transitions have given young people real responsibilities in the home, or part-time jobs, schools continue with childlike relationships, based on regimentation, dependence, and passivity. Patterns of organisation, systems of rules, teaching styles and pupil expectations limit the ability of schools to treat young people as young adults. As a result the following couplet is the almost universal response of Scottish 15/16 year olds to the central difference between school and Work Experience:

*"treated like a wean,**
treated like an adult"

There is a growing paradox in this. Schooling was extended in the 1970s (Rosla), and effectively extended again in the 1980s (YOP/YTS). Adulthood was deferred. Yet schools became increasingly concerned to promote the maturity that the extensions were inhibiting. Such a paradox was not lost to the pupils. Together with the system of disqualification, it helped to promote a kind of "mental truancy" where huge differences open up between what is supposed to be happening in the minds of the learners, and what is actually happening. If we place one against the other, the result sometimes looks like this:

---

* child

official curriculum	*pupil curriculum*
numeracy *literacy* *science and technology* *social studies* *guidance* *leisure* *art* *social responsibility* *careers*	*e.g. talking to each other* *shouted and bawled at* *treated like an adult* *'TREATMENT'* *joking* *chatting* *e.g. writing* *working with a pencil* *sitting at a desk* *listening* *'WORK'* *colouring in* *thinking* *repeating* *copying things down* *e.g. moving about* *day-dreaming* *doing nothing* *getting at the teacher* *ignoring the lesson* *'NON-WORK'* *acting the clown* *slagging* *being bored* *killing time* *meeting pals*

(*Clydebank External Evaluation*)

The key problem here is that a large minority (at best) are there, in front of us, facing the right way, and absent in most other ways. Offered neither extrinsic reward by the assessment system, nor intrinsic challenge by the curriculum, the majority are left either with the rituals of rote learning, or those of confrontation - for those who insist on a challenge.

D. SUMMARY

School fails to meet many of the transition needs of young people - and spreads that failure across the "ability range". All pupils suffer from these inadequacies. The failure rests on the inability of school to motivate many pupils, on the numerous forms of "disqualification" it offers, and on the pattern of extended childhood with which it reduces its citizens. Gow and McPherson's "Tell Them From Me" has admirably reminded Scottish education of its authoritarianism and indifference to the majority. David Hargreaves has reached a similar conclusion about the condition of English education:

"My argument is that our present secondary-school system, largely through the hidden curriculum, exerts on many pupils, particularly but by no means exclusively from the working-class, a destruction of their dignity which is so massive and pervasive that few subsequently recover from it."

Or, as the industry representative in our working group put it:

"The first thing we've got to do with our recruits from school is give them their confidence back."

It would not be a sensible policy to ignore schools' failings, and simply offer a work or college-based remediation. If we are to take Transition Learning seriously we have to look at it as a single coherent, developmental process beginning in school and continuing in further education or work-based learning. That progression must involve technical and practical learning, but it must also involve changes of status (clearly marked in terms of relationships, responsibilities, and ways of learning). Then a coherent and genuinely progressive form of Transition Learning may begin to replace the present series of confused institutional disjunctions.

These generalisations give rise to specific problems - we can now add to our list of practical problems at the end of Chapter 1. And we can then ask the question: how well do present proposals answer these questions and demands?

(1) *what sorts of courses would be more relevant, and would engage the interest of more young people? What does 'relevance' mean? What is a relevant process, rather than content, for learning?*

(2) *how can we make use of outside-school experiences - both planned events like Work Experience or Community Service, and unplanned transitional experiences tied to the family, part-time jobs, and so on?*

(3) *what sorts of proposals would cope with the central dilemmas of:*

(i) *the hidden curriculum of exclusion and failure that contradicts transition learning goals relating to confidence and self-reliance?*

(ii) *the "qualifications" obsession of both young people and the institutions that contribute to the above?*

(iii) *the tendency of learning institutions to extend childhood, and the effect on the social development of young people?*

(iv) *the meaninglessness to many young people of education when it is stripped of its instrumental justification of qualification, or access to training, or job?*

References

1. "The structure of the curriculum in the third and fourth years of the Scottish secondary school" (Munn Report) Edinburgh: SED/CCC 1977

2. "Tell Them From Me. Scottish school leavers write about school and life afterwards" L. Gow & A. McPherson Aberdeen: AUP 1980; D. Hargreaves op.cit.; Clydebank EEC Project Evaluation op.cit.

3. Gow & McPherson op.cit. Chapter 2

4. SEDA archive, Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh, 1981 survey results

5. All quotations Clydebank External Evaluation except
   (a) Gow & McPherson op.cit. p.106 (b) ibid. p.106 (c) ibid. p.81
   (d) ibid. p.74 (e) ibid. p.30 (f) ibid. p.35
   (g) ibid. p.69 (h) ibid. p.30

6. "Joint Working Party Report on English at Foundation, General and Credit Levels". The Munn & Dunning Reports, Government Development Programme, Scottish Examination, May 1983 pps. 34-35.

7. "Beginners guide to Munn & Dunning" R. Duncanson, D. Crooks, in "Scotsman" 11.6.83

8. For a critical review of profile assessment see "Assessment in Youth Training: made-to-measure?" SCOVO 1982. For a more optimistic review, see "Profiles" FEU 1982

9. D. Hargreaves op.cit. p.17.

4. COURSES: PRESENT PROPOSALS

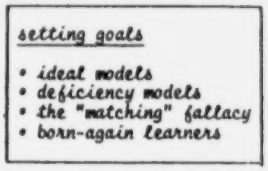
This section looks at present proposals in "vocational preparation". Features which contradict the objectives and procedures of Transition Learning are briefly identified and illustrated. The aim is to help the reader evaluate for himself or herself both national and local courses in "vocational preparation". To this end the section ends with an evaluation checklist based on the text, and against which "vocational preparation" courses may be assessed.

The criticisms of the Working Group fall into three loose categories:

setting goals	- *what the course sets out to achieve; how its goals are derived; the assumptions made about the nature of the learners*
curriculum	- *the contents of the course; the processes of learning that are envisaged; how values are expressed and handled*
course development	- *the target group(s) for the course; the relation between curriculum and assessment; the role of negotiation; the problems of rigidity and flexibility*

Each of these groups of criticisms will be considered in turn.

A. SETTING GOALS



Most of the nationally devised "vocational preparation" courses the group examined set course goals both over-optimistically and in a vacuum. They made false assumptions about young people, and about the nature of "the needs of industry".

(i) *ideal models*

Goals were improbably broad in scope, and implied the possibility of vast changes in behaviour and attitudes as a result of the course. Yet often these transformations were supposed to emerge from very prosaic, content-oriented schemes - and attitude change as a result of information input is always very unlikely:

scope: *To provide a basis on which the young person acquires a set of moral values applicable to issues in contemporary society.*
(Basic Skills, FEU)

efficacy: *To bring about an ability to develop satisfactory personal relationships with others.*
(Vocational Preparation, FEU)

content: (a) to assist the young person to develop more fully the coping skills necessary to promote individual self sufficiency

(b) to assist the young person to develop a basis from which to make an informed and realistic decision about the immediate future

(c) to bring about a flexibility of attitude and a willingness to learn

(d) to encourage the capacity to approach various kinds of problems methodically and effectively and to plan and evaluate courses of action

(e) to improve competence in a variety of study skills likely to be demanded of the young person

(f) to bring about a level of achievement in literacy and numeracy appropriate to ability, and adequate to meet the basic demands of contemporary society

(g) to bring about the continuing development of physical and manipulative skills in vocational, domestic and leisure contexts and to appreciate these skills in others

(h) to bring about sufficient political and economic awareness to understand the social environment and participate in it

(i) to encourage the ability to develop satisfactory personal relationships with others

(j) to assist the young person to develop an informed perspective on the role and status of a young person in an adult society

(k) to encourage the continuing development in the young person of a set of moral values applicable to issues in contemporary society

(l) to assist the young person to cope with changes in technology and career and the prospect of periods of unemployment, and

(m) to assist the young person to appreciate the physical and technological environments and the relationship between these and the needs of man in general and working life in particular.

(Scottish Certificate in Vocational Studies pilot, 1982-83)

Like patent medicine, the "ideal model" always promises more than it can deliver.

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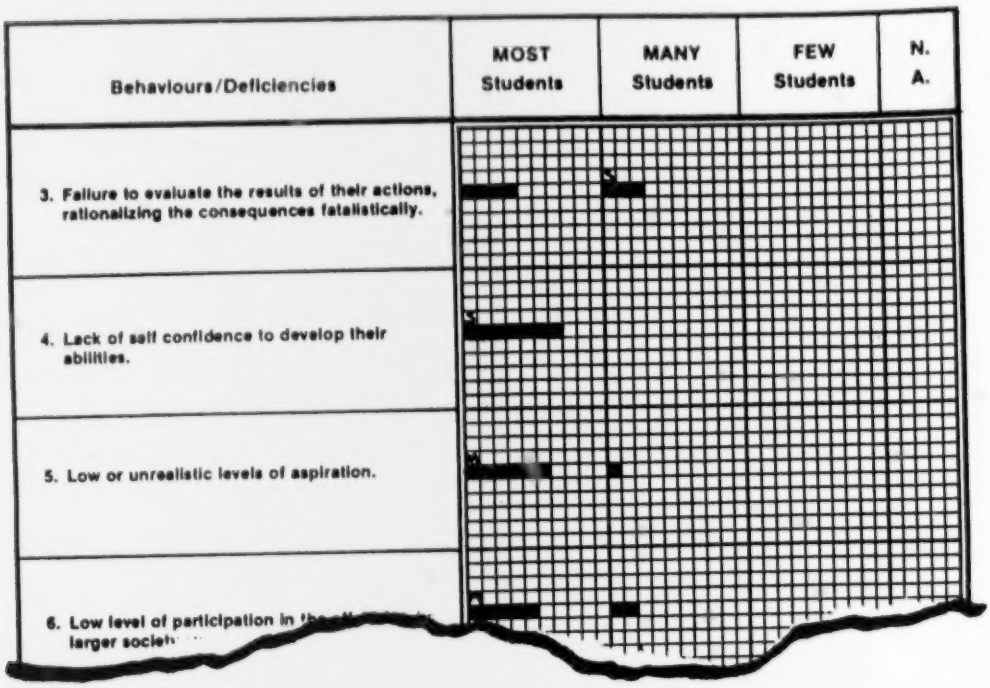
(ii) *deficiency models*

Life skills courses have always had dark thoughts about their "clientèle" - as the Canadian progenitor of British initiatives demonstrates:[1]



Behaviours/Deficiencies	MOST Students	MANY Students	FEW Students	N. A.
3. Failure to evaluate the results of their actions, rationalizing the consequences fatalistically.				
4. Lack of self confidence to develop their abilities.				
5. Low or unrealistic levels of aspiration.				
6. Low level of participation in [illegible] larger society				

YOP and early UVP courses sometimes added to these tendencies, shifting the "blame" for unemployment to the young people themselves - they lacked "employability", "work readiness", and so on:[2]

> 10. *That many of the young people*
>
> - *lack motivation*
> - *have no record of success in school activities*
> - *are psychologically immature*
> - *are unsure of themselves*
> - *are occupationally volatile*
> - *are socially unstable*

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- *come from "unsatisfactory" family backgrounds*
- *lack belief in the possibility of academic or occupational success*
- *find immediate income more attractive than training and good long-term job prospects*
- *are unconvinced that education can help them.*

Occasionally the deficiency model extends well beyond the world of work to an implied moral delinquency:

> *Describe and analyse the moral consequences of actions*
> *e.g. driving without insurance, the conception of a child, concealing information at interview*
>
> *(Basic Skills, FEU)*

Such assumptions imply a deficiency model. These models are largely discredited in the literature on social education and vocational preparation but they underlie many school programmes and YOP schemes. They lead inevitably to the automatic "Don't Curriculum" (sex, drink, drugs, hygiene, etc.); to "skill" remediation that is often a crude attempt to manipulate attitudes; and to tutors adopting an unnecessarily negative or protective role.

(iii) *the matching fallacy*

The ideal model is based on a social utopia; the deficiency model on a social nightmare. But the matching fallacy is founded on a work-based utopia. It is assumed that reading back from the nature of work produces lists of needed skills and attitudes.

The curriculum from vocational preparation can thus be derived from "job-skills":[3]

LISTENING AND TALKING

Table B3

SKILL DESCRIPTORS	ALL JOBS (n=968)	JOB FAMILIES: CLERICAL (n=479)	SALES (n=135)	TRANSPORT SERVICES (n=81)	HANDS AND HAND TOOLS (n=179)	MACHINES (n=63)
SITUATIONS IN WHICH LISTENING AND TALKING TAKES PLACE						
Converse with one person	+	+	+	+	+	+
PURPOSE OF LISTENING						
Get information/ instructions	+	+	+	+	+	+

Such approaches tend to reach this sort of conclusion:[4]

> *It is skills needed for listening and talking, reading, and planning and problem-solving that are most likely to be found in a wide range of different jobs (...) This finding may have implications for comprehensive education ...*

There are problems with that kind of equation. Everyday behaviours are not necessarily "skills" that need to be learned. Even if they are skills, and they are needed, it is often not clear what the learning problem is. For example, the "problem" may be confidence rather than the inability to plan, and so on - we can solve the wrong problems. Finally, work-based learning (although it can often provide useful pointers) cannot provide a necessary or sufficient basis for a course that is educationally or socially

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desirable. Taking the goals for education/training from a "skills" analysis of jobs ignores - amongst many other things - the unskilled, unsatisfying nature of much work available to young people, and indeed to adults:[5]

> *Then we offer them virtually no choice in our overorganised industrial units. For eight hours a day they are regarded as children, or ciphers, or potential problems and managed and controlled accordingly*

Benyon made the point rather more vividly:[6]

> *They all tell the story about the man who left Ford to work in a sweet-factory where he had to divide the reds from the blues, but left because he couldn't take the decision-making.*

One Training Officer put it as strongly as this: "Industry's the last thing we should be training people for." At least we should be very cautious about moving straight from job-skills analyses to course prescriptions.

(iv) *'born again' learners*

Course titles in social education and vocational preparation are full of the metaphors of birth. 'Preparation for Life' is perhaps

the most common. Learners are assumed to be without culture or previous experience:

> *"To provide a basis on which the young person acquires a set of moral values applicable to issues in contemporary society."*
>
> *(A Basis for Choice, FEU)*

Such assumptions are unrealistic. They ignore all the other kinds of cultural and work-based learning that young people acquire through part-time jobs, the home, the peer group, and the experience of unemployment. They offer the paradox of a "relevant" education/training that manages to ignore the young person. And they lead to the "ideal model" approach to setting course goals.

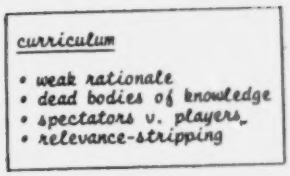
What do these criticisms of goal-setting suggest for course planning in Transition Learning? What positive lessons can be drawn?

Instead of ideal end-points, deficiency models, occupational inventories, and context-free young people, course planners should take <u>real</u> starting points - the young people themselves and their immediate individual, and local, interests and needs.

Real starting points mean:

- setting attainable goals, in terms of breadth, ambition, consistency and resource constraints
- negotiating with learners to ensure their commitment, and the relevance of the goals to the individual or group
- taking into account the prior experiences of young people in and out of school and work
- obtaining local knowledge of constraints and possibilities
- allowing for reappraisal of goals as part of the course design

B. CURRICULUM



There were several major curricular problems with the "vocational preparation" courses that the Working Group looked at: they often depended on uncertain or unclear ideas, and lacked clear links between content, methods and aims; and they tended to rely on a "subject" approach - although that feature had become obscured by words like "course", "modules" and "integration". They also tended to promote a passive kind of knowledge which avoided controversy and issues of values.

(i) *weak rationales*

There were a number of weaknesses. Often the meaning of the concepts were unclear - "employability", "skill", "generic", and so on. For example, much of the curriculum rationale within YTS will depend on "occupational training families" (OTF) and the "generic skills" that can be identified from such analyses of jobs. Yet - to give just one instance of OTFs in action - a shelf-filler in a supermarket seems in the end to be somewhat arbitrarily allocated to a category of employment and hence to a "training family":[7]

In the latter case it could be argued that a shelf-filler should be put in the Transport Services family while a cashier should be in the Machines family. This idea was, however, rejected. In practice it was found that a shelf-filler is sometimes expected to act as a relief cashier and that a cashier might be expected to do some shelf-filling. As part of their duties, or as progression in the job, both might work on counters such as wines and spirits, fresh meats etc. where the customer is served. In allocating jobs to families it was the broad technology with which the job was associated that determined the choice.

Even if concepts were clear, course rationales often suffered from internal contradictions between aims, content and method. The initial Scottish Certificate in Vocational Studies proposals vividly expressed these contradictions, as this teacher noted:

The course proposals contained in the Consultative Document form a list of general aims which may be justly applied to every course of study available from nursery through to post-graduate education. The difficulty in accepting these course proposals arises from the sadly obvious contradictions between these aims (para. 20) and the outline curriculum and specific syllabuses provided: the Draft Syllabuses.

The slip from radical aim to conservative practice is common in education. SCVS proposals in 1982-83 are much improved, but there is still a typical disjunction between aims and content:

Aim:

To encourage the student to develop the social skills necessary to: establish good personal relationships with others, appraise some of the moral and social problems which beset today's society, and adopt a mature and responsible attitude to work and leisure.

versus

1. *Social Skills*

The student should be able to:

1.1 Explain why individuals adopt different roles for different situations
1.2 Describe different types of behavioural patterns and outline alternative responses to these
1.3 Recognise and identify sources of conflict between individuals
1.4 Show an appreciation of the difficulties involved in arriving at satisfactory solutions to some of the current social and moral problems such as discrimination and bigotry
1.5 Describe and discuss the extent and adequacy of local facilities for leisure and recreation.

(1982/3 pilot syllabuses, SCVS)

There is no evidence to suggest that the development of attitudes and relationships will stem from such a cognitive approach.

(ii) *dead bodies of knowledge*

In catering for this "new educational area" of vocational preparation, as it has rightly been called,[8] FE Colleges have had to adapt from a narrowly technical to a broadly vocational approach. Schools have had to move from a subject base, to an integrated mode. Inevitably, courses have a legacy of traditional methods, content approaches and "product" learning. The real danger comes if vocational preparation courses fail to break out of these moulds, as in the case of SCVS. SCVS wants to be an active, relevant course, but its curriculum verbs contradict its goals.

explain, discuss, describe, recognise, identify, show an appreciation of ..

(1982/3 pilot syllabuses, SCVS)

All these verbs refer to "SOCIAL SKILLS" - but really that passive list means the old 'O' grade etiquette. "Doing" is nowhere. Nor is "feeling".

A teacher commented:

> *The Consultative Document states the need to move away from traditional and academic courses and subjects (para. 15) yet the Draft Syllabus is set out on strict subject lines. Para. 15 further suggests that a more relevant curriculum (than what?) will motivate the students. But the highly structured content of the 'core' is mainly repetition of school work. This paragraph also states concern that 'some young people follow courses which do not seem apposite to their experience.' Nothing in the Draft Syllabus accepts that the students have any experience, interests or abilities.*

The danger lies in a course espousing ideas like integration, flexibility, and student-centred approaches, as in this extract ...

> *For the course to be successful, it is essential that the learning be seen as relevant by the young people. This means that it must be related to their own experience of life and their anticipations and expectations of the adult world, including the world of work. The vocational focus of the course should provide the vehicle for this, as could the use of work experience, either real or simulated. It is important, however, that domestic and leisure contexts should also be used in constructing learning experiences, for it may be that these areas will motivate some young people more than vocational studies.*
>
> *(para. 25, SCVS pilot scheme 1982/3)*

.. and yet offering a series of draft syllabuses which make it inevitable - whether the course designers want it or not - that many tutors and teachers will start <u>there</u>, rather than at paragraph 25. In this way the legacy of subject approaches remains, even if the labels have changed.

(iii) *spectators v. players*

This is a related point. Schools have long concentrated on "the central issue of progression in intellectual skills and ideas" - as the Scottish Munn Report has it. But much of this kind of learning promotes a tacit spectatorhood. The job of pupils is to become informed spectators, not skilled players. Contrast the rationale of Munn with that of the RSA 'Education for Capability' Scheme:*

Munn	RSA
acquire knowledge	act
describe	do
study	plan
explain	organise
understand	make
memorise	create

As this teacher put it:

> *If it is accepted as important that students develop the skills of self-evaluation, the ability to choose, responsibility for themselves and others, then opportunities for that kind of learning must be inherent in the organisation of the course and a much more flexible and open-ended course structure is necessary.*

* The Royal Society of Arts "Education for Capability" scheme gives awards to educational courses and schemes which promote the kinds of shift implied in the table on this page.

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(iv) relevance-stripping

This element of curriculum design offers a fascinating aspect of how curricula are shifted from the dynamic to the inert. The Scottish Social Education Project describe the problem well - "a quite pervasive fear of indoctrination." At its height the moral panic surfaces in the press looking something like this:

A ROCKET FOR TEACHER.

A TEACHER at a Glasgow school has been disciplined following a storm over "vicious" essays by his pupils on Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The teacher — at

By JAMES WATSON and DICK TEMPEST

Reds under the B.Eds etc! The effect of such polarisation is that relevance-stripping begins. Sectarianism, social class, trade unionism, disarmament, homosexuality, and a whole range of other contemporary issues become too hot to handle - except in so far as learners can informally approach the issues. More significant, the really controversial aspects are defused from the inside - reduced to institutional structures, the law, "facts", and historical antecedents:

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CONTROVERSIAL		NON-CONTROVERSIAL
What the Unions stand for	→	what T.G.W.U. stands for
Grunwick	→	Tolpuddle Martyrs
Northern Ireland	→	shame-about-the-whales, etc.

It is a way of handling controversy and opinion that is needed, not a way of burying it. The Scottish Curriculum Paper 15 opts for burial when it advances a facile dichotomy between positions "logically derived" and "value judgements". SCVS also insists: "Efforts should be made to avoid the use of value judgements wherever possible", and yet expects students to "appraise some of the moral and social problems which beset today's society." FEU's "Basic Skills" employs a different tack, reducing "common moral dilemmas" to "individual v group loyalty, what constitutes 'stealing' at work, quality of workmanship, tax evasion, 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay', sexual or racial discrimination."

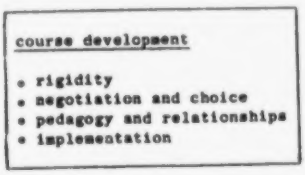
Clearly, the solution is to find ways of handling controversy, rather than avoiding it, or channelling it into less challenging or more suitable themes. The Annan Report on broadcasting suggests the idea of "due impartiality" and sensibly comments:[10]

> *For the individual life is a gamble: he is entitled to stake everything, if he desires, on one interpretation of life. But broadcasting organisations have to back the field, and put their money on all the leading horses which line up at the starting gate, whatever colours they are carrying.*

In teaching terms, the range of significant opinion has therefore to be covered. Another solution is for the teacher to analyse his or her value position, and share it openly with the group.

So: we need far greater clarity about concepts, objectives, procedures and curricula. Curricula should require active learning, and should be able to respond to the controversial and the immediate without evasion. The curricula should aim to give critical knowledge and social competencies to learners. The usual divides between "social subjects" and "personal development" or "social education" should be abandoned. What young people should know, how they should learn, and what they should be, are related matters. They require integrated procedures.

C. COURSE DEVELOPMENT



The most common weaknesses in course development concerned the rigidity of the courses, contradictions between courses and other education or training provision, and unsuitable learning styles and innovation strategies.

(i) *rigidity*

- Early thinking in "vocational preparation" stressed that the new clients were not a "target group". Since then, more rigid divisions have emerged. For example, Sir Keith Joseph speaks of 17+ in terms

of the "bottom 40%". The FEU has pointed clearly to the consequences of such rigid target groups for "vocational preparation" - the emergence of "a 'tertiary modern' sector and by implication associated with low ability school leavers." In Scotland, the development of SCVS has seen a shift away from such rigid targeting. Nevertheless, there is a danger that - in practice if not in intention - Vocational Studies will emerge only as "what-Foundation-pupils-do-next." Clearly, it is the intention of the Scottish 16-18 developers to produce flexible and progressive modules. But it remains to be seen how effectively the school system can shake off the burden of the "Foundation" tag, and whether 16-18 will be able to avoid creating in effect an equivalent "Basement Studies" in post-compulsory education. The loss of a comprehensive notion of "vocational preparation" in YTS would lead to the discrediting and possible collapse of the lowest "levels" of study within 16-18 provision.

A second aspect of rigidity can be seen in the emergence of set categories of "need" (as in FEU's 11 basic skills categories; or CGLI's 14). The notion of "basic skills" or "core skills" has become too rigid. 'ABC in Action' stressed that its proposals were "a suggested framework within which to work. It is not a syllabus, nor is it immutable." If such flexibility is lost, relevance and motivation is also lost. As a teacher stressed:

> *"It's really important which kids - which individual kids - you're aiming at. No contents, or methods, or generalisations, hold across the board. There are no standard children or standard needs."*

This trend towards rigidity can also be seen in the language of "slots", "inputs", "modules" and YTS "packages". These are words about what administrators do, not pupils or trainees or tutors. It is as if the social development of young people could be reduced to a programmed content when we all know that is the least likely possibility. Target groups, and set "needs" lead quickly to inflexible and irrelevant programmes.

(ii) *negotiation and choice*

Negotiation and choice can be central issues, or peripheral ones. For example, negotiation is the central procedure of Trainee-Centred-Reviewing.* At the other extreme is the kind of approach to giving responsibility to the learner advocated in the Scottish Munn Report:

> *"Thus, of any element proposed for inclusion, we should ask whether it develops pupils' knowledge of themselves and of their social and physical environment; whether it serves to cultivate appropriate emotional and moral attitudes; and whether it contributes anything to pupils' social competence."*

Yes, but who should we ask? Clearly not young people. Indeed, Munn sees "giving responsibility" to be a simple question of giving subject choices in S3. The 16-18 Action Plan of the Scottish Education Department hopes to develop a much stronger commitment to negotiation both through choice of module and within the module itself, where individual choice and variety will be encouraged:[10]

* Trainee Centred Reviewing (TCR) is a term used by the Careers Counselling and Development Unit for a learning procedure. It is "a process by which young people are encouraged to say things about themselves relating to past experiences, present situation and feelings, future potential, needs and expectations"[11]

.... it will allow young people to negotiate individual programmes of study, the entry to which will depend on and develop from their school-based attainments.

Within work-skills courses, and in YTS curriculum materials, the idea of negotiation is often submerged by the "package deal" approach to the curriculum, leaving little room for either tutor or trainee to manoeuvre. Negotiation can play a fundamental part in course development - as a basic feature of the learning process, and not just as a this-or-that curriculum option.

(iii) *ways-of-learning and relationships*

In this report, ways-of-learning and relationships are seen as the crucial issue. Present proposals seem to be shifting from general and often progressive aims towards greater specificity, and more mechanical applications. Too often specificity refers to content, rather than to procedures for learning. Rigid and conservative consequences follow:

Set out as it is, it [SCVS] begs 'traditional' teachers to use the old formal approaches.
(FE tutor)

The result often is, as the same tutor remarked:

Everything had been covered but nothing had happened.

The FEU's most recent elaboration of basic skills contains the same danger. Although the FEU has advocated a learner-centred, negotiated approach to vocational preparation, the ways in which Vocational Preparation Aims are now being spelled out could easily lead to short-circuiting of the process-based approach, and its replacement by a more "teachable", content-based approach.[13]

Aim 1

To bring about an informed perspective as to the role and status of a young person in an adult society and the world of work.

The students should

● 1.1 Describe a typical organisational structure of at least 2 different types of workplace or organisation, and relate this structure to their respective functions
This should include:
identification of component functions (eg: sales, store-keeping, production, maintenance, professional services, administration, book-keeping)
and who performs them (eg: a department v one man as

(*Basic Skills*, FEU)

Indeed the short-circuit is apparent in the "Basic Skills" commentary. After ruling out inflexibility - "not suggested that this checklist was in any way prescriptive; indeed its dynamic nature has always been stressed.." - the succeeding paragraphs go on to refer to the "prescribed objectives."[14]

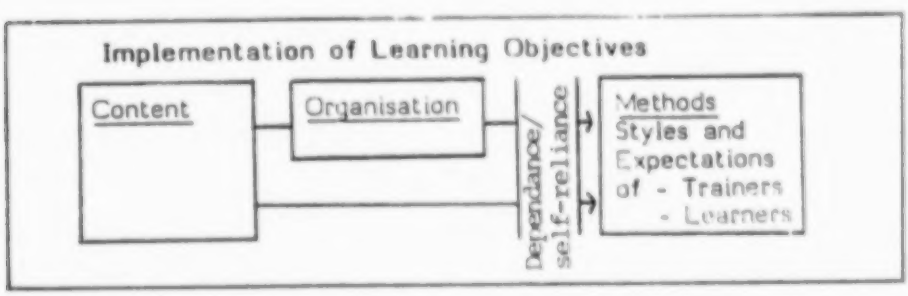
Without real flexibility and a central concern for ways-of-learning, the aims of skill ownership and of transferability are unlikely to be achieved. Such rigidities impose directive patterns on relationships, and miss the point:[15]

> *Ultimately, the argument is not about techniques or even about content, but about the quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils and the assumptions on which these relationships rest and, beyond that, about the kind of society we want to be members of. A modern education worthy of the name must be an education against alienation.*

This point will not be laboured - it is central to the final section of the report.

(iv) *implementation*

The issues of pedagogy and implementation are closely related. The order suggested in "Foundation Training Issues" - content ⟶ organisation ⟶ methods - should be reversed:[16]



Programmes that start with the content, end with the content as well. The logic of Transition Learning is to start with the method, not the content. And the logic is also to see implementation processes in Stanton's terms:[17]

So we have to start by saying 'You are here. It is our job to respond to your needs'. That means that all course tutors have to be curriculum developers. The job cannot be delegated to the senior lecturer in charge or to some committee of an examining body.

It is interesting that a recent evaluation of a community YOP initiative confirms that prescription:[18]

In the same way that vocational preparation is not a system which trainees undergo, but rather a process in which they are centrally involved, staff must not be forced into the operation of an administrative device but be integrally involved in the process.

Team-based course and staff development are rare procedures in contemporary "vocational preparation". For many educational and training institutions the rapidity of change, and the low priority allocated to such tasks and client groups, have condemned implementation to a series of ad hoc, reactive and uncoordinated efforts.

To summarise: course development should concentrate on flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the learner. That means rejecting the re-emerging pattern of "courses-for-target-groups". It means basing course development on local, practitioner-based models. And it means a far greater stress on specifying procedures for learning rather than the minutiae of examinable content.

This section has skimmed over a large number of weaknesses common to "vocational preparation" prescriptions. It has not attempted to provide a comprehensive or in-depth study. Nor has it tried to move from criticism to the constructing of a framework for Transition Learning. That latter task is taken up in the final chapter:

> *The real problems are all picked up between the paper curricula and the real curricula.*
>
> *(teacher)*

D. COURSE APPRAISAL

The third section of the report has provided a rough-and-ready basis for evaluating "vocational preparation" courses. Naturally, it does not cover all possible questions, or all possible courses. The following checklist summarises these points, and can be used to create an agenda for course development.

	YES	NO	ACTION
. *goals unrealistic in scope* (p.28)	☐	☐	_____
. *goals unrealistic in efficacy* (p.29)	☐	☐	_____
. *assumes attitude change from information input* (p.28)	☐	☐	_____
. *implies deficiency model of learners* (p.31)	☐	☐	_____
. *course too narrowly based on work skills* (p.32)	☐	☐	_____
. *ignores learners' prior experiences* (p.33)	☐	☐	_____
. *fails to allow reappraisal of goals through negotiation* (p.34)	☐	☐	_____
. *unclear curriculum concepts used* (p.35)	☐	☐	_____
. *contradictions between aims, method and content* (p.35)	☐	☐	_____
. *reduces skills/competencies to information/knowledge* (p.37)	☐	☐	_____

COURSE APPRAISAL (cont.)

	YES	NO	ACTION
. based on traditional subject approaches (p.37)	☐	☐	_____
. promotes passive styles of learning (p.39)	☐	☐	_____
. avoids controversial issues (p.40)	☐	☐	_____
. one-sided approach to attitudes/ values (p.41)	☐	☐	_____
. envisages rigid target group (p.42)	☐	☐	_____
. aims at the "less able" only (p.43)	☐	☐	_____
. based on inappropriate set list of skills (p.43)	☐	☐	_____
. excludes learners from course content (p.44)	☐	☐	_____
. over-preoccupied with course content (p.44)	☐	☐	_____
. inadequate stress on ways-of-learning (p.45)	☐	☐	_____
. inadequate stress on tutor/ learner relationsips (p.45)	☐	☐	_____
. implementation process based on content rather than process (p.47)	☐	☐	_____
. insufficient staff involvement in course preparation (p.48)	☐	☐	_____

References:

1. D. Mullen "A conceptual framework for the life skills program" Employment and Immigration, Ottowa, Canada 1982 p.22.

2. "First Progress Report" Jordanhill UVP group, Glasgow, March 1978.

3. "Skills needed for young people's jobs" Vol. 1 C. Townshend IMS Report No. 40, University of Sussex 1982 p.107.

4. ibid. p.78.

5. P.G. Gyllenhammer "People at Work", cited in A.G. Wirth "Alternative Philosophies of Work: implications for vocational education, research, and development" Occasional Paper 78, NCRVE, Ohio State University, November 1981.

6. H. Beynon "Working for Ford" cited in Hargreaves op.cit. p.42.

7. C.Townshend op.cit. p.23.

8. G. Stanton "Analysis of Curriculum Needs" Coombe Lodge Reports 13, 7, 1980: 244-251.

9. "The Social Subjects in secondary schools" Curriculum Paper 15, Edinburgh: HMSO/SED 1976 p.31.

10. Report of the Committee on the future of broadcasting" (the Annan Report) London: HMSO 1977 p.30.

11. B. Pearce, et.al. "Trainee Centred Reviewing (TCR). Helping trainees to help themselves" MSC Research and Development 2,p.2.

12. "16-18. An Action Plan" SED, 1983, 4.33.

13. "Basic Skills" op.cit. Appendix 3.

14. ibid. p.45.

15. G. Murdock, G. Phelps "Mass Media and the Secondary School" Basingstoke: Macmillan, Schools Council Research Studies, 1973, p.150.

16. C. Hayes et.al. "Foundation Training Issues" IMS Report No. 39, University of Sussex, February 1982 p.52.

17. G. Stanton op.cit. p.248.

18. "Ways to Change. Vocational preparation programmes for MSC community projects" NCVO p.19.

5. TRANSITION LEARNING IN ACTION

The previous sections of this report criticised aspects of educational provision and of "vocational preparation" courses, advocating - in general - what was called Transition Learning. The final section gives specific recommendations for, and illustrations of, Transition Learning in action. It aims to:

- *identify effective implemetation strategies*
- *show ways of creating relationships based on agreement between teacher and learner, on risk-taking, and on the progressive transfer of responsibility*
- *indicate practical counselling and reflective learning methods*
- *illustrate ways-of-learning involving negotiation, active learning, and an approach based on competencies and critical knowledge.*

It is a tall order for a short report, and there are two other limitations that have to be acknowledged:

- *this cannot be a do-it-yourself manual for practitioners. Pre-packaged courses and methods are a contradiction of our arguments.*
- *staff development is necessary because Transition Learning is different from conventional teaching and makes different demands on the tutor or teacher.*

Finally, there is a paradox. We want to be specific in our illustrations, but to avoid any suggestion that the following are prescriptions that will fit any course or circumstance.

The section will deal in turn with implementation issues, learning relationships, counselling and reflective learning, and student-centred learning techniques.

A. IMPLEMENTATION

The best way of implementing change seems to be to apply the same methods to course planning as to student or trainee learning:

WAYS OF PLANNING (tutors)	WAYS-OF-LEARNING (trainees)
1. CONSULTATION: *involvement of all staff in planning; deciding goals, resources, methods etc.*	*INDUCTION NEGOTIATION*
2. *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: team-building; sharing skills, developing expertise*	*PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT*
3. *LEARNING*	*LEARNING*
. *INVESTIGATIVE/PARTICIPATIVE: local possibilities; investigation of curricular options; tutor involvement in researching needs etc.*	. *ACTIVE/EXPERIENTIAL*
. *PRACTITIONER-CENTRED: course development based on, and sensitive to, staff needs*	. *STUDENT-CENTRED*
. *OWNERSHIP (course); staff control of course development processes and content.*	. *OWNERSHIP (skills)*
4. *FEEDBACK/INTERNAL EVALUATION: channels for staff/trainee criticisms; real possibility for curricular changes on basis of evaluation etc.*	*RECORDING/SELF-ASSESSMENT*

Springboard Lanark have also recently published their own account of implementing change.[1] Their recommendations are:

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

. FORM WORKING PARTY TO REPRESENT DIFFERENT OR CONFLICTING INTERESTS AND AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

. INVOLVE TRAINEES IN THE PREPARATION AND PLANNING

. REVIEW CURRENT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENTS

. DISCUSS THE ISSUES IN DEPTH

. REVIEW YOUR AGENCY'S OWN CURRENT ASSESSMENT IN PRACTICE

. IDENTIFY RELEVANT AREAS FOR CHANGE

. WRITE UP AND REVIEW PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS AND WORK COMPLETED BEFORE EACH NEW MEETING BEGINS

. DELEGATE WORK TO BE DONE AND INVOLVE WHOLE GROUP

. REVIEW COMPLETED WORK BEFORE IT IS INTRODUCED AND MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

. SET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, ALLOWING ENOUGH TIME FOR RELEVANT STAFF TRAINING

. SET THE DATE FOR A FORMAL REVIEW PERIOD OF ALL THE CHANGES IN PRACTICE.

Some of the most intractable problems in developing courses are simple ones. For example, many courses are taught by disparate groups of strangers. Team-building is a first essential. Where course leaders have been able to build relationships between staff, courses tend to develop rather than remain static. Some of the following often helps:

. *limit numbers of staff participants in the course to reduce fragmentation*
. *work towards volunteer rather than conscript staff*
. *build working group out of staff involved*
. *use outside facilitator to help in the above*
. *fight for time and priority in order to do any of the above*

For example, if staff agree to use an external facilitator there can be immediate dividends in terms of cohesion, morale, and sense of purpose. After a one-day facilitation, a college course leader wrote:

Some staff have significantly changed their emphasis from product to process objectives, and others have begun to work on joint schemes. They now know who else is working in this area with them. They have gained confidence from discovering that the difficulties they are meeting with in dealing with young unemployed people are not unique to their classroom or their College. They have also come together as a group and met with the College Principal in order to discuss with him some of the improvements that the College could offer to these young people - discussions and changes are continuing.

(FE College Lecturer)

Another problem often arises with the role of the "co-ordinator." The coordination problem often exists at two levels. The first level concerns administrative action, and involves making space for the course to operate within the institution:[2]

.... innovation should arguably begin with the self education of senior management ... Generic programmes of vocational preparation mean that the curriculum transcends traditional college departments ... responsibility for programme and curriculum development needs to be clearly allocated.

(Basic Skills, FEU)

If no space, then no coherent course, nor any prospect of course development. The second level is equally important, but often involves a different co-ordinating role, concerned with making good use of the space created for the course. In this case the greatest need is for some of the following:

- *clear remit for the course leader*
- *chance to develop relationship with staff*
- *chance to develop relationship with trainees*
- *developmental role in course development, working with staff team*
- *cooperative learning between college/employer/school*

The first condition is for the course leader to feel personally involved, to have an opportunity to know what the course is really about, and to bring staff together to jointly plan or evaluate. As one pilot YTS employer put it:

> *Every good scheme has someone who sees it as his or her baby - even to the extent of waking up at night screaming about it.*

In other words, the essence of the coordinator's role is that it should be about developing rather than coordinating. Otherwise the risk of travelling in circles becomes great, as many case studies of the coordinator role in private and public enterprises have suggested:[3]

> *And as for coordination, on closer examination we will see that it is a term not for solving problems but for renaming them so they emerge at the end the same as they were at the beginning.*

A third common problem is that many of the weaker schemes lack structural change. The course consists of a number of loosely articulated inputs from different subjects, departments, or institutions. Coherence is often helped by creating some structural change, such as:

- *a base that learners can identify with*
- *a school curriculum which makes experiential learning compulsory and assessable*
- *some kind of integration of teaching, counselling and course leader roles.*

For example, in the Scottish Education Department's "Social and Vocational Skills Project" fourth year secondary pupils have experiential learning as a central not a supplementary part of the course. Work in industry or the community is assessable and counts towards final certification. In the Clydebank EEC Project, certain teachers of fourth year secondary school pupils were called "Transition Tutors". They took their pupils for up to 15 periods a week, acted as course leaders, informal counsellors, and "brokers" in the transition from school-to-work, visiting Work Experience placements and so on. Evaluation showed that pupils generally preferred the more personal relationship that evolved, and were much more likely to consult the tutor than the formal guidance system. Industrial Tutors in UVP had a similar function. They were industry-based, worked with trainees, liaised with college tutors and other workplace staff, acted as informal counsellors, and helped to develop the scheme and monitored trainee progress. Evaluation reported favourable outcomes. The experience of the TWL projects points similarly to the central importance of any innovation promoting closer tutor/trainee relationships.

Thus, implementation is about consultation, the forming of staff relationships, joint planning and development, and the estimation of what kinds of structural change are feasible and most likely to promote course goals.

In this context the FEU publication "Tutoring" has useful evaluation checklists, although most schemes have enough idiosyncracies to make it worthwhile for the course team to make up their own version.[4] (Often informal but structured discussions can do away with the intermediate and time-consuming stage of a formal checklist approach.)

Tutorial Development Programme Check-List

Resource Sheet 5

The purpose of this check-list is to encourage staff developers and policy makers to consider the present state of tutorial development in the college or scheme, with a view to considering future plans. It could be useful for a group of people, including tutors, to use this check-list as a stimulus for discussion and action planning.

COLLEGE

---

1. Aims

	Yes	No
(i) Has there been considered discussion within the college (or scheme) or the aims of the tutorial role?	☐	☐
If so, how?		
Papers	☐	☐
Seminars	☐	☐
Conferences	☐	☐
(ii) Is there a policy document that specifies the aims of tutoring in vocational preparation?	☐	☐

2. Stages

(i) Are regular *case discussions* held in the college?	☐	☐
are they effective?	☐	☐

Outside college		
Schools	☐	☐
Careers Service	☐	☐
Employers	☐	☐
	☐	☐
Inside college		
College counsellor	☐	☐
Careers adviser	☐	☐
Other departments	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐

Evaluation questions

With reference to your current practice:

1. *what do the trainees or pupils think of the course? what do the staff think?*
2. *what are the staff's opinions of the way the course was implemented, its goals and methods determined etc?*
3. *what possibilities exist for course improvement?*
   - *staff "ownership" of the course; trainee influence on course?*
   - *relationships amongst or between trainees and staff?*
   - *support for the course (e.g. timetabling; course meetings; resources; priorities)?*
   - *integration of the course (e.g. between education and industry; between different departments or subjects)?*
   - *staff training (e.g. curriculum development; assessment; interpersonal skills)?*
   - *systematic course evaluation (regular feedback sessions; opportunities to revise practices)?*

B. RESPONSIBILITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING

The first section of this report stressed the social context of learning. The working group see the development of good working relationships - between trainees and staff - as fundamental. If relationships are established on a more adult and equal footing, students can begin to take responsibility for their own learning. This in turn allows greater and more effective use of experiential learning and groupwork. The key is the progressive and calculated transfer of responsibility based on a developing trust with the group. This is a core learning procedure, and basic to the notion of Transition Learning. As Bronfenbrenner put it, the key process is this:[5]

> *Learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressively*

more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment and when the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person.

The following examples show how these moves can take place within a wide variety of courses and contexts - like trainees planning a residential, or working out for themselves how to organise a classroom project, or reviewing course outcomes, or taking responsibility for group discipline.

(i) *developing relationships*

The classic stand-off is: you can't treat them like adults unless they behave like adults. How can the shift from coercion to consensus be made? Strategies vary with personalities and circumstances, but common, successful approaches have included:

- *staff working with learners at a shared task*
- *small groups created to help forming of relationships*
- *responsibility for tasks devolved to learners*
- *residentials used to build trust, and develop a less formal atmosphere*
- *roles changed to give staff longer time with the group*

None of the above are guarantees for success, but in some form or other they often help. And all of these generalisations need to be qualified - the constant "topping up" of small groups can destroy the development of the group in some Work Skills courses. Care has also to be taken that the small groups do not become clannish - that different individuals learn to work together.

Giving responsibility has to be a gradual and consistent process - once given it cannot be taken back without the collapse of the learning process. Again, tutors have to move gradually - giving responsibility and taking learning risks as they and their trainees begin to develop trust.

(ii) *using residentials*

Many tutors and teachers find residentials an excellent forum for establishing relationships within groups and between staff and trainees. They offer the prospect of the rapid development of trust and empathy. Follow-up residentials can be used quite differently as events planned by the trainees themselves, or as the basis for counselling sessions. Often, benefits flow from the simple things - trainees or pupils get to know the person behind the "teacher" - what one teacher called "taking the mask off":

> *Kids need time to find out that you are human as well. If you can somehow reach this relationship - make the kids realise that you are fallible even if it's beating you at darts or kicking hell out of you at football.*

Residentials do not, therefore, have to be a question of charging about the hills. They can also involve indoor activities based on an informal atmosphere and shared tasks.

(iii) *classroom and non-classroom projects*

A tutor described how a conventional office practice project can be

revised to develop relationships within the group and to shift responsibility for learning:

> *Initially the project had involved handing out tasks to individuals in the class. It involved in-coming mail. The learning procedure was changed. Instead of handing out 8 tasks to the group, they had to prepare their own. They had to choose a supervisor, decide how to duplicate and collate the tasks, and plan how the work would be done. Each took it in turn to be supervisor and had to lead the group. One of the groups that did this project had caused all sorts of problems at school - they were always having discipline interviews or whatever. The school had been very wary of sending that particular group in [it was a school-F.E. college link course for 15/16 year olds]. But from the word 'go' they just took it on board. They were made responsible for their own learning, and they never once asked "why are you not telling us what to do?"*
>
> *The final part [of the course] was really asking them "what do you think you got out of this?" and a lot of feedback was about them being far more confident about tackling things and making decisions - because they'd never been expected to make decisions before. But through changing the way the project was done, they had been forced into making decisions and taking responsibility.*
>
> *(tutor)*

The example shows how conventional vocational skill learning (in this case office skills) can be taught more effectively by restructuring the learning tasks so that learners can develop responsibility for their own learning. It involves greater initial preparation, but makes the teacher/learner relationship much easier for both in the end. There are a great number of possibilities for all skill areas to use such simulations, or to employ mini-company types of approach.

For example, tasks can be created which involve real jobs and responsibilities outside the confines of the classroom and formal curriculum, and which still draw on and encourage technical skill learning:[6]

> ...he had no real legs or pelvis. The NHS [National Health Service] had supplied him with artificial legs, but they couldn't get any crutches small enough for him to use. Seventeen engineering firms had been contacted but none of them would make the necessary crutches, simply because it wasn't profitable for them. Then we were contacted. Alain...designed a prototype and we had a pair of crutches out within a week.... We've made four more pairs of these crutches since then for similar cases..

Or projects can be created which unite a concern for technical learning and for the development of entrepreneurial skills or leisure interests:

CREATIVE RECYCLING

Participants in the Technical Recreation Program make imaginative and practical devices out of scrap metal and 'electronic junk.' This material is discarded by local industry and the phone company -- wires, computer parts, switches, batteries, oscilloscopes. Out of the disorderly pile of tubes and tangled wires come painstakingly made flashlights, buzzers, crystal radios, and more complex appliances. The young people rely largely on ideas from books and magazines of popular science that lie scattered about the old, disused school in which the program operates. Many learn by watching more adept and experienced participants. A retired engineer spends a great deal of time with them, explaining such complicated devices as oscilloscopes, static generating tubes, and wave generators. Described as 'relevant recreation' by its director, Tec Rec's participants have put the program on their list of fun things to do.

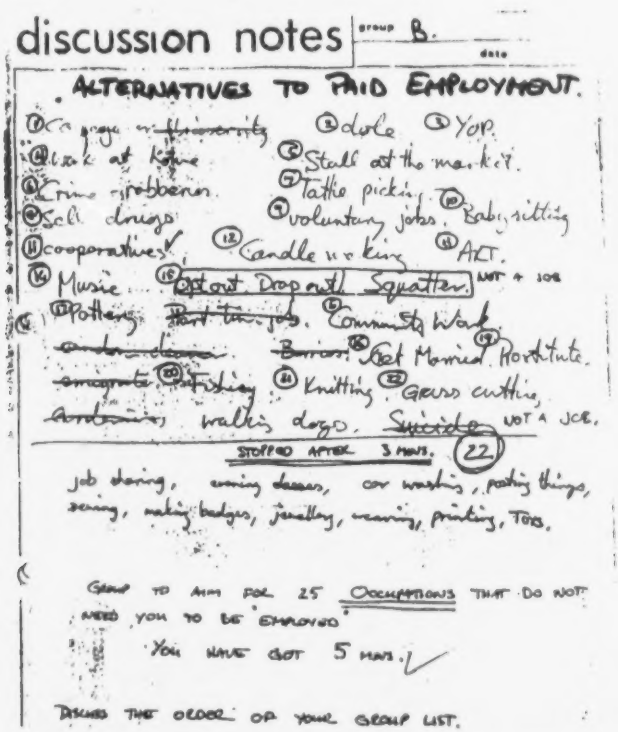
(iv) curriculum

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The following illustration shows how the nature of the curriculum and the way it is established can begin to shift "ownership" towards the learner, through negotiation:

> *When we do one of the early negotiation procedures at the start of the course one of the pupils records what's said - they write on the blackboard and the teachers put ideas in at the same time as the pupils. Because they see us coming up with ideas they then start putting in one or two good ones themselves.*
>
> *[secondary pupils starting special vocational preparation course]*

Again, the curriculum materials can focus centrally on the learner and his or her future options. This stress on what the learner has previously done, or wants to do, and can conceive of, implies a shift to a learner-centred rather than a knowledge- or information-centred approach. For example:



discussion notes GROUP B.

ALTERNATIVES TO PAID EMPLOYMENT.

① [illegible] ② dole ③ YOP.
④ Work at home ⑤ Stall at the market.
⑥ Crime - robberies ⑦ Tattie picking ⑧ Baby-sitting
⑨ Sell drugs ⑩ Voluntary jobs.
⑪ Cooperatives ⑫ Candle making ⑬ ART.
⑭ Music ⑮ Adopt. Drop out. Squatter. NOT A JOB
⑯ Pottery. ~~Part time jobs~~. ⑰ Community Work.
~~Embroidery~~ ~~Barman~~ ⑱ Get Married ⑲ Prostitute.
~~Emigrate~~ ⑳ Fishing ㉑ Knitting ㉒ Grass cutting
~~Acrobatics~~ walking dogs. ~~Suicide~~ NOT A JOB.

STOPPED AFTER 3 MINS. 22

Job sharing, sewing dresses, car washing, mending things, sewing, making badges, jewellery, weaving, printing, TOYS.

GROUP TO AIM FOR 25 OCCUPATIONS THAT DO NOT NEED YOU TO BE EMPLOYED

YOU HAVE GOT 5 MINS.

TICKED THE ORDER OF YOUR GROUP LIST.

(school vocational preparation course)

Where courses involved both on-the-job and off-the-job learning there is great advantage in tutor and employer building the curriculum together, so that trainees see the course as an entity - "a fruitcake not a sandwich", as a tutor put it. The curriculum ought therefore to be subject to negotiation between institutional providers - as well as between tutor and learner.

Such shifts in relationships and responsibilities are basic to Transition Learning, and are not a cop-out by the teacher. They involve a more complex and subtle role as counsellor and facilitator, but they do not imply an "it's-up-to-you" kind of abdication. They demand more of the learner, not less. The purpose of such changes is to promote learning. These procedures are about increasing the efficiency of learning, not about "niceness" or "giving in". The absence of these kinds of responsibility, and the kinds of affective education they represent, is just as marked from more academic courses. Its effect on entrepreneurial skills can hardly be positive, and may go a little way towards explaining why we are a nation of clerks, rather than shopkeepers.

Evaluation questions

1. How would you assess staff/trainee relationships

   . concerning shared goals?
   . on the basis of openness?
   . in terms of learners taking responsibility for their own learning?
   . as providing opportunities for risk-taking?
   . in assisting and hindering social learning goals?

2. How does your course try to develop relationships between learners and between staff and learners? How effective are these strategies?

3. Which learning tasks could be re-worked to give learners a greater responsibility? Which teaching functions could be usefully converted to learning tasks? How could the curriculum give learners a more central role?

4. Are there staff training needs:

   . concerning working with groups?
   . interpersonal skills?

C. COUNSELLING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING

But the thing is: we've still got an awful lot of people - even the ones who are saying that counselling's a good idea - who don't believe that you need a relationship with the kid you've got in front of you

(F.E. college tutor)

It's at the odd moments during the course that the revelations come. The "problem-by-appointment" style just doesn't work as well, however hard the guidance teacher works at it.

(school teacher)

Guidance and counselling are often wrongly reduced to an administrative function, a question of special inputs, and "problem-by-appointment". The relationship between adult and child, or tutor and trainee is much more important - whether or not the tutor or teacher has a specialist function.

Similarly, reflective learning seems to depend more on the nature of the relationships established within the group. As a tutor put it:

> *The students won't come out of their shell and casually walk up and ask a question or get to some of the points that are deep inside.*

The answer to the question "who is the counsellor?" is whoever gets asked the question by the pupil or the trainee.

Given the development of such relationships the tutor could focus learning on a retrospective look at the social dynamic of the group:

> *Such debriefing often focusses on the social interaction that took place: who took charge? how did you make decisions? what happened when you disagreed? In these cases, it is the combination of the experience itself and the reflection on its 'social' components that constitutes social education.*

Nor need such counselling always centre on the adult-juvenile relationship. Under the right conditions counselling may become part of the responsibility that learners are able to take:[7]

↘ MORE PEER COUNSELING

PROJECT WOMEN -- IN A MAN'S WORLD OF WORK

High school women researched careers normally dominated by men. After reading, discussions with career persons, and visits to work sites, the students shared their findings with female classmates through mini-courses, individual career counseling, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.

College of Education
University of Maine
Orono, Maine 04473

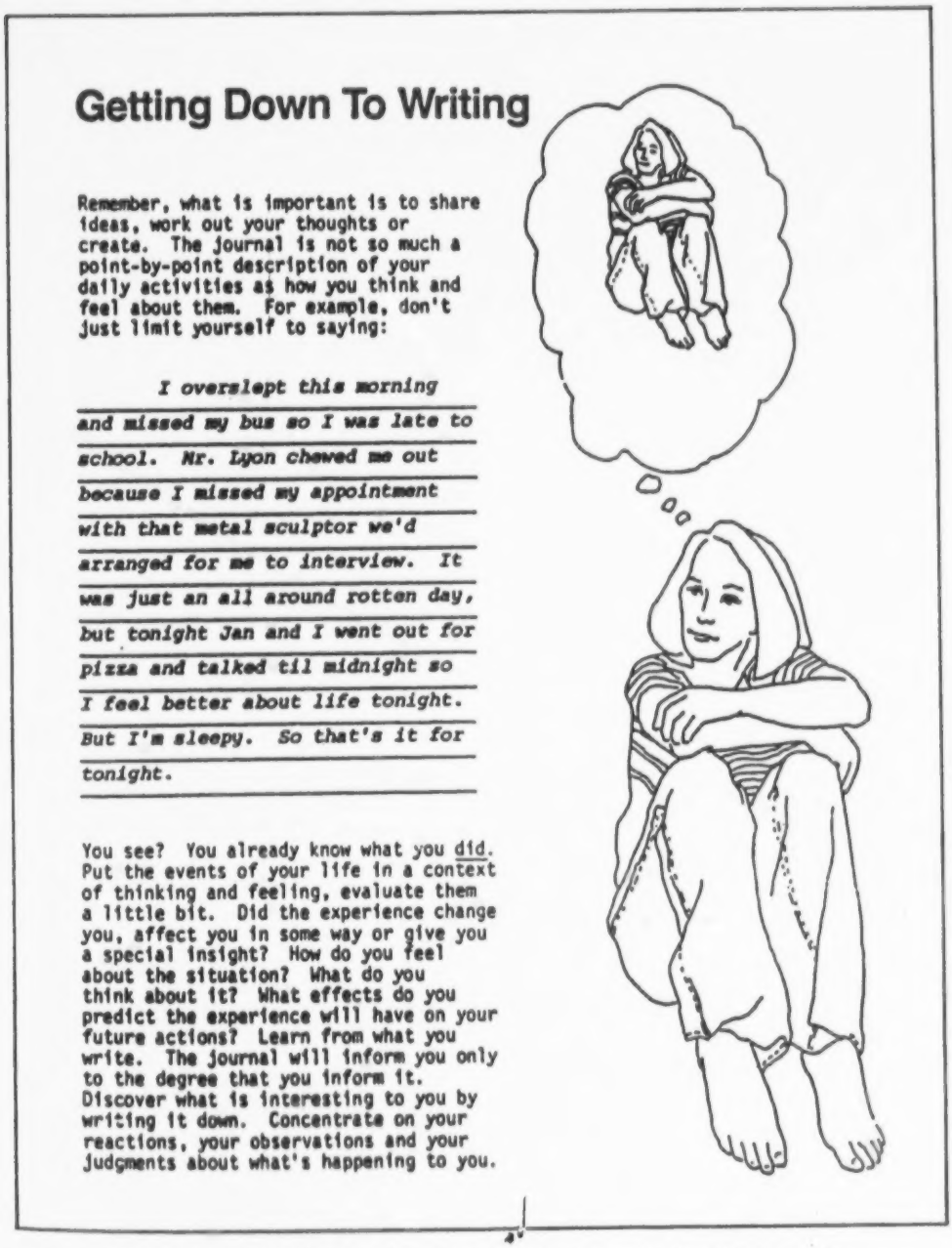
PEER COUNSELING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

High school students act as companions and counselors to peers having trouble in school and to elementary and junior high students making the transition to junior and senior high. In training provided by members of Stanford University's Department of Psychiatry the students cover identification of problems, behavioral principles, drug abuse, school attitudes, personality problems, etc.

Department of Psychiatry
Stanford Medical Center
Stanford, California 94305

Reflective learning has become something of a catchphrase within vocational preparation debates. Very often, it is reduced to blank logbooks or diaries. Such approaches can lead to reflective learning, but the questions direct the learner to cataloguing events ('what did you do that was new today?'). The following example[8] adopts a different approach - a style that has also been successfully developed and adapted in the Shannon SPIRAL Project in Eire. In the latter case the journal becomes a confidential and

2-way exchange between counsellor and learner, and the journal remains the property of the learner:



Getting Down To Writing

Remember, what is important is to share ideas, work out your thoughts or create. The journal is not so much a point-by-point description of your daily activities as how you think and feel about them. For example, don't just limit yourself to saying:

I overslept this morning and missed my bus so I was late to school. Mr. Lyon chewed me out because I missed my appointment with that metal sculptor we'd arranged for me to interview. It was just an all around rotten day, but tonight Jan and I went out for pizza and talked til midnight so I feel better about life tonight. But I'm sleepy. So that's it for tonight.

You see? You already know what you did. Put the events of your life in a context of thinking and feeling, evaluate them a little bit. Did the experience change you, affect you in some way or give you a special insight? How do you feel about the situation? What do you think about it? What effects do you predict the experience will have on your future actions? Learn from what you write. The journal will inform you only to the degree that you inform it. Discover what is interesting to you by writing it down. Concentrate on your reactions, your observations and your judgments about what's happening to you.

Figure 2-1. Helping students know what to write in their journals. (From *Student Guide to Writing a Journal.* Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1977, p. 3.)

Other features which help promote reflective learning include:

- *sound basis of relationships between tutor/learner or between learners*
- *learner ownership and control of the record, journal, or logbook*
- *a central role for the record in the learning or assessment process*
- *confidentiality, especially between tutor and learner*
- *the tutor being in a position to ask informed and purposeful questions*

That last feature - purposeful questions - can be exemplified thus:[9]

- *Was a given incident typical of that job or merely unique to that site or person? If you can't answer, how can you find out?*
- *Have other students encountered similar situations at the site? At other sites? How have they dealt with the situations?*
- *What have you learned from this experience? How can you now apply what you've learned in new situations?*
- *Are there things you wish you had done differently? What are they?*
- *If you were a resource person, what are some things you would do to help a student feel comfortable at the site? How could you help a student learn important things about the job?*

Different experiences demand different questions, but an important barrier to reflective learning is that the tutor has little idea of the experience that the trainee has had, and is therefore reduced to "tourist" type questions, like "where did you go?" "what did you like best?", and so on.

The first essential of developing counselling and reflective learning therefore seems to be to create the course structures that will

allow relationships to develop. The second may be to use group-centred, and non-directive styles to assist communication. The third is to have a clear and purposeful strategy for handling work-based learning.

Some useful publications include:

- *Leslie Button's "Developmental Group Work with Adolescents"*
- *John Miller's "Tutoring" FEU*
- *Hopson & Scally's "Working with groups in the classroom" or "Lifeskills 1 and 2"*
- *Eugene Kennedy's "On Becoming a Counsellor"*
- *L. McClure et.al.'s "Experience-Based Learning: how to make the community your classroom" NWREL, 710 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204*
- *P. Leeson's "Schools-Industry & Curriculum development". The Building Societies Association. June 1982*

Evaluation questions:

1. *Do the course structures enable adequate relationships to develop between staff and students to allow counselling to take place? What model for counselling might work better in your circumstances?*
2. *What staff training needs can be identified in this area?*
3. *What opportunities for reflective learning exist within the course? How could they be better developed? Do trainees have experiences, or do they learn from them?*

D. WAYS OF LEARNING

This is the central aspect of Transition Learning, which is a set of procedures rather than a prescribed content. The issues

examined here are: how do you start the learning process? where do you start? how do you decide what would be relevant? how do you get the agreement of learners about course goals? and what kinds of role do these activities imply for tutors? Again, it has to be stressed that although the instances given below are real, it would be wrong to assume that they necessarily have "off-the-peg" utility. Individual circumstances count for a lot.

(i) *getting started*

Traditional practice starts from externally defined "needs" - like CGLI's 14 basic abilities, MSC's 11 occupational training families, or NTI's 5 core skills. Transition Learning suggests that learning should start from the interests of the learner, and develop an interaction between learner interests and social competencies or critical knowledge that the young person becomes willing to accept as "his" or "hers". An FE tutor caught it exactly:

> *"You've got to take something that's relevant to them and work out from that, and also work in towards it."*

This is the direct opposite of mainstream advice. Curriculum Paper 15 - on the social studies - claims:[10]

> *Relevance can be a strong motivating force but it can easily be confused with interest.*

A teacher offered this account of how he tried to involve pupils in deciding on an agreed list of reasonable outcomes that could be decided at the outset of a "vocational preparation" course:

> *It's really a case of sitting the kids down in a circle and saying: 'Right, this is about why we're here, and what this course is about. What would be the good things and the bad things that might come out of it?' Then we get the kids to work it out for themselves - with the staff putting up suggestions as well. They eventually end up with their own list. This - [the example shown on the next page] was actually one girl's write-up. Having done that, we write up an agreed list of reasonable outcomes. The next stage is: they split into groups and decide what they want to do in the course. Their ideas are all written up on a blackboard, along with some of our ideas and items from local employers' skill lists. So we end up with this huge list and sort out what would be possible and would meet the outcomes we looked for. In the end you get a list of negotiated and discussed content so that the kids don't feel its an imposed course.*
>
> *From then on, it's 'how do we implement, how do we go about doing all of these things?' You get the kids as far as possible to decide for themselves the best way they can learn about whatever it is, and where they could go to learn it, and so on.*

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REASONABLE OUTCOMES OF SCOPE

First consider the possible outcomes

GOOD	BAD
get more confident	on the dole
full time job	unemployable
go to college	go to college
better behaved	get on folks' nerves
be more grown up	stay the same
get on with adults	people think we're daft
face reality	skive a lot
get initiative	don't do any work
be mature	get arrested
work in a group	behave worse
work on your own	get expelled
do well at things	worse manners
pass exams	nobody likes you
get a good reference	end up on a YOP
learn respect	fail again
earn respect	keep dreaming
put up with folk	do nothing
make lots of money	get bored
good experience	think you are great
meet more people	fighting still
write and spell better	

After further talking about this we decided that it would be reasonable to expect most of the following

more confident
more responsible
common sense
understand the problems (reality)
be able to cope
work with others
know more about yourself
more self respect
respect for other people
better behaviour

(SCOPE course, James Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh)

There is nothing new about such negotiation phases outside traditional school and college practice. Mike Freshwater's "can do" cards offer another example.[11] So too does Trainee Centred Reviewing (TCR) - a way of learning developed and promoted by the Careers and Counselling Development Unit at Leeds University. TCR offers this example of initial negotiation:[12]

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Example 8

TRAINEE SELF REVIEW : GOALS (OBJECTIVES)

Which of the following would you say are reasons why you came to Y.P.U. or are goals (objectives) which you would like to achieve while on the scheme.

Personal

To get to know myself better. ✓
To like myself more. ✓
To become more confident. ✓
To become more self disciplined. ✓
To know more about what I want to do with my life. ✓
To get better at making decisions. ✓
To become more adaptable and mobile ✓

To get better at reading and writing. —
To become better with numbers. —
To manage my money better. ✓
To learn how to manage a home. —
To learn more about personal health and hygiene, contraception etc. ✓

To get on better with other people. ✓
To understand other people more. ✓
To communicate with others better. ✓
To trust others more. ✓
To make new friends. ✓

Work

To get to know the sort of job I would like. ✓
To know the sort of job that would suit me. ✓
To want to get a job more. ✓
To want to go to work more. ✓
To enjoy work more. ✓
To get on better with the people who I work with. ✓
To work better with (alone or "groups" of people. ✓

(Trainee Centred Reviewing, CCDU)

This is a rather more rigid approach, but the most important point in both illustrations is that such discussions about goals should be continuous and not just an initial once-and-for-all activity.

Sometimes, different tactics for getting started are needed. The experience of schooling, or unemployment, or fruitless YOP schemes, can reduce the confidence of many young people. In such cases initial activities may select the goal of giving early success. For example, one school-based vocational preparation course set up a mini-production line that rapidly made a product, overcame fears of the "educational" context, and got the group working together.

Researching local needs can also provide an impetus for a course, as in this example stated by the Scottish Social Education Project:[13]

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In some schools community work undertaken has started from a study of needs within the local community rather than relying on what is thought to be useful. In one school this led to the innovation of a talking newspaper for the blind. This served to provide a very useful service to a disadvantaged minority but at the same time it provided the pupils involved with very useful skills, for example, in selecting and editing news, and in transposing news from a written to an aural medium.

Perhaps most important, starting points may also be found in young people's own experiences. In this way presumptions about "needs" and "problems" can be avoided. and classic bloomers like this one from Curriculum Paper 3 can be prevented:[14]

Most of the schools found it advisable to spend longer on vocational studies for boys and on community studies for girls, in order to take account of their natural interests.

Instead tutors can use the real experiences of the group as starting points for learning.

.... especially in the second course, we had a sort of motherly attitude from a few of the girls because one of the girls was getting engaged - the rest of them seemed to take it on themselves to learn everything that she should know about buying a house, insurance, bringing in a variety of pamphlets that they had brought from different insurance companies, checking out-did she know about this, can she claim this, had she gone somewhere to check on rings that were at a discount price here, what she should do with all her presents, how should she arrange it ... They sort of took it on as a group to organise this girl's engagement and wedding..

White and Brockington give a good illustration of the same opportunistic approach of picking up and using the starting point. Their example

also demonstrates how not to introduce curriculum content in the first instance - hiding behind the audio-visuals is a favoured evasive tactic of which we all have been guilty, but it seldom works and it even more rarely sparks off the learning opportunity described below: [15]

> 'Is it a real film—or like we see at school?' asks Ted.
> I hesitate--'Well, its a World in Action thing—an ITV programme —have you seen 'em?'
> 'Oh yeah, they're crap.'
> Suitably squashed I turn to the projector and start the film 'Caught for a Baby'.
> 15 minutes into it, Ted and Smithy want to go downstairs to finish their birdboxes. Derek is looking restless. Frank is asleep. The girls are sitting silently. Stop the film. Moans from the girls, so I explain that the boys obviously don't want to watch it.
> 'We do, though,' they exclaim in unison.
> 'Doesn't affect us,' remarks Smithy.
> I feel there's the beginning of a useful discussion. How to use it?
> 'Why not?' I ask.
> 'We knows it all.'
> 'Do you—I wonder.' (Said in a provocative and disbelieving tone!)
> 'Course we do.'
> My brain races for a suitable reply. Haltingly, we explore further. What do they know? Is it really the girl's fault if she gets pregnant? The boys all think so. None of the girls share this point of view, understandably. They're all scathing in their condemnation of lack of guidance and information from both schools and parents.
> 'But you picks it all up anyway,' adds Smith.
> 'Do you?' I try to look doubtful.
> None of them knew much about the pill or the cap. Durex are the be-all and end-all of contraception.
> 'Don't buy 'em from machines though,' Ted inf

Thus "getting started" can involve an initial discussion of needs and expectations - and the subsequent agreement of formal or informal learning targets. These may be written on a board, or stuck on the wall, or in a portfolio. They may also be quite specific and academically demanding: [16]

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN #1

STUDENT PROJECT PLAN — Page 2 of 4

II. IDENTIFICATION OF RPs, ROs, & CRs

A. Completed Visits (Identify resources already visited for Orientation)

Resource Name	Address	Phone	RP	RO	CR	Hours Spent
Cong. Black's Off.	Brookdale		X			2
Union Corp.	San Francisco			X		6
City Bank	Martinsville		X			4

B. Planned Visits (Identify the resources you PLAN to work with. Repeat names from above if you plan additional visits. Your project MUST include an Exploration with at least one RP or RO.)

Resource Name	Address	Phone	Acty Level* O	E	I	RP	RO	CR	Est. Hours
Union Corp.					X		X		12
City Bank					X	X			10
Cong. White's Off.			X						2
Franchise Tax Board			X						2
Social Security Off.			X						2
Cong. Black's Off.				X					5

* O = Orientation; E = Exploration; I = Investigation

C. Related Reading/Research (Give Titles and Authors) The Right to Privacy by Otis Williams, 1984 by George Orwell, Search and Seizure by The Institute for Fundamental Freedoms.

III. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS OR PREREQUISITES NECESSARY FOR SITE VISITS (See Resource Guides. Some sites require special insurance, health certificates, etc.)

A. Prequisites _____

B. Materials or Equipment _____

IV. ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES

A. Site Visits 45 Hrs. Product Production 20 Hrs. TOTAL HOURS 83

B. Reading 18 Hrs. Other (specify) _____ Hrs.

LAST DATE FOR COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE PROJECT _____ PLANNED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE _____

The question of "getting started" can be approached through local research into community need, or through the opportunistic use - but systematic development of - learning opportunities. In general, such diverse approaches have at least two things in common - they give the teacher or tutor a responsive rather than a directive role, and they give the learner's own prior experience and interest a high priority.

(ii) *defining relevance*

Relevance is usually seen as a question of content : what information? which skills? But it is more often a question of process:

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... talking about industrial studies or T.U. studies - if it is taught in a school classroom as an abstract theoretical subject almost like ancient history then it's not going to create an awful lot of interest. Neither is it relevant.

(teacher)

A definition of relevance along "process" lines suggests 3 dimensions:

- *a sense of individual learner involvement (in setting course goals; in feedback or discussion)*
- *a particular kind of context (local and immediate; issues brought up by individuals or the group)*
- *a way of learning (often active, concrete, practical methods)*

The following extract from a discussion between two F.E. tutors emphasises this need to start from the issue of the personal involvement of the learner, and to define relevance <u>through</u> the learners rather than on behalf of them:

It was possibly the first time ever they'd been asked questions like 'what things would you like to find out more about?' 'what activity would you find interesting?' 'what do you feel you need to learn?' 'what are your expectations of the course? [...]

If negotiation and goal-setting are placed at the centre of a learning experience, it makes sure that the experience is relevant to them and captures their attention. Gives them a sense of ownership of the learning or activity that's taking place in the classroom, because it's not something external to them. It's something they've slowly been drawn into..

It's a power-sharing exercise?

Yes, but obviously there's a lot of control from the teacher's side.

Some teachers that haven't seen negotiation in operation and have just read about or heard about it

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perhaps think that it's a question of giving up all responsibility?

Not at all. I think actually it gives you a much more difficult role to play than you would have by simply standing at the blackboard.

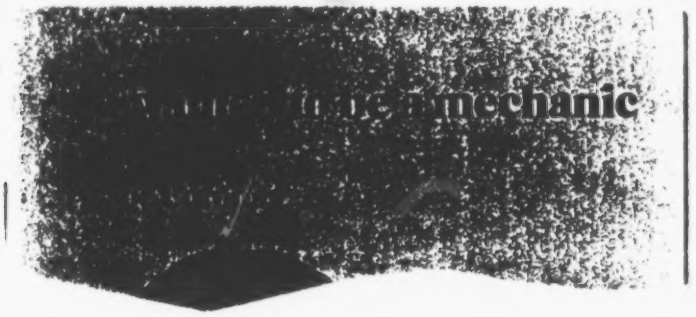
Thus the foundation for relevance rests on a negotiated agreement between tutor and learner. A different kind of example of the "involvement", or psychological aspect, of "relevance" can be seen in the common problem of the "visitor" to the classroom. A UVP tutor describes her experience:

In the sessions where we did the old chalk and talk system, the youngsters very quickly switched off. They needed somebody who could talk on a very open level to them and be interactive rather than a one-way system. [...]

"The same thing when it came to dealing with the issue of the handicapped. They didn't want someone to hand them a pamphlet and say there are 'X' amount of handicapped people in the area - we actually brought somebody in in a wheelchair who talked to them, not about all the standard things such as: how do you get upstairs, do you find difficulty going here and there? The chap actually talked about everything from his own private life to his sex life - the kids were amazed just how open the guy was but they very quickly got a better understanding of what this guy's problems were in general life, as well as in how he met the library situation.

Another aspect of relevance is the context of the learning. We have already given examples where learning is based on the cultural experiences of the young people, and where it uses these interests to develop social or basic skills. Another, more unusual way, of using the local and the immediate context of young people, was developed by

the Basic Skills Unit in their series of booklets written by young people on YOP courses.[17] These accounts can variously be used to explore contemporary problems, develop literacy, or, indeed, as models for similar accounts written by young people:



A more extensive application of the same approach can be seen in the "Cultural Journalism" project, where the objective is the production of a publication that documents the local community and its people. The approach here is more structured and more ambitious than most, but what it tries to do is to use local cultural research as a basis for skill learning and personal development:[18]

A. Orientation to Cultural Journalism
   1. History of Cultural Journalism
   2. Philosophy

B. Skills Introduction
   1. Interviewing Techniques
      a. Introduction to Interviewing
      b. Communication skills
      c. Taping Procedures
   2. Photography
      a. Introduction to Photography
      b. Mechanics of Camera and Lenses
      c. Camera Handling
      d. Darkroom Procedures
         1. Developing film
         2. The Print
   3. Processing

(Cultural Journalism Project)

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The third aspect of relevance concerns methods. Active or experiential learning is necessary where many of the competencies that the status of citizen, worker, or adult entails cannot be memorised or noted down. They can only be exercised. It is often only in realistic rehearsal that "relevance" can be seen:

> *.... they worked in the practical office in the Industrial Insitute and had to deal with a real switchboard where any old person could come on from outside and get mad with them if they didn't put through the calls properly. That was as realistic as we could get it. I found that the Industrial Institute set-up is absolutely super for developing the kids, because they see that more as a factory - although it's still a protected environment.*
>
> *(F.E. tutor)*

> *It's easier to understand how a guest feels if you've been one yourself. You know what it's like to be at the receiving end of bad service.*
>
> *(UVP hotel trainee)*

In addition, rehearsal often involves a different sense of purpose, and a change in status that is fundamental to Transition Learning. The power of real experience to motivate has long been evident in school Work Experience schemes.

This **dimension** is the one most neglected at the academic end of educational provision. There is an unspoken belief that the "able" do not need active learning, or practical and real learning situations -

in order to "be", all they need is to "know". Indeed in education in the UK the very terms "active and concrete" are often code words for "less able" curricula, a way of spelling things out that has parallels with the practice of talking loudly to foreigners so that they can understand. Yet it is possible to achieve relevance by offering every learner a variety of ways of learning:[19]

1 Know your student

SIDE ONE

LEARNING STYLE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Either fill in or put a check mark by the answer or answers below that best describe you and your needs (check as many responses as you wish). When you are done, talk your responses over with your teacher.

In what physical situations do you learn best?

_x_ quiet place
___ noisy place
_x_ small discussions
___ large group discussions
___ alone
___ lecture
_x_ individual conferences
___ other _____

What are your favorite subjects?	Why?
Social Studies	*Here and now problems*
Business Education	*Good job market*
English	*My grades*
Math	*All except algebra*

What turns you on to learning? If you could choose ways to learn, which would you choose and what kinds of materials would you like to use?

WAYS

_x_ projects
___ written assignments
_x_ reading and answering questions
___ group discussions
_x_ interviews
_x_ observations
_x_ research
_x_ attending classes
___ "hands on" activities
___ other _____

MATERIALS

_x_ tape recorders
___ videotape
___ typewriter
_x_ pen and paper
___ mass media activities (collages, cartoons, etc.)
_x_ library resources (books, magazines, etc.)
___ other _____

When given an assignment, can you work alone or do you like someone to check in with you now and then?

___ need to have directions explained more than once or twice
_x_ mostly self-directed but also like to check in with someone now and then
___ need to be told more than once to start a task and to complete it
___ self-directed and responsible enough to complete assignment independently

Thus relevance is not so much a dilemma about content, as about involvement, context and method. This does not imply, however, that relevance is in the end a question only of the young person's interests - as he or she perceives them. Such a definition may be inadequate:

> *A preoccupation solely with negotiation, and process, and contracts are a soft option - not a contract but a contrick - read the paper, talk about the issues - pursue the wishes of the group in front of you. That certainly focuses on the stage of the development of the young people but it may also restrict their growth and development. Bodies of knowleldge are important; for example, the political nature of the world and its social organisation. We have a core content.*
>
> (F.E. *tutor*)

But the idea of core skills or core content does not imply - to anyone in the working group - the idea of the predetermined, pre-arranged syllabus. The order, the approach, the kind of depth and coverage, must all depend on the developing of relationships, and the following up of learning opportunities that will often be tangential to the initial theme, but not to the course aims. As one of the group put it:

> *I can't know where we're going because it depends on them. To give sections of time, progression of activities etc. is completely deceptive. There is no day-after-day reality.*

Relevance, then, is something to be worked out, not something to be predetermined.

(iii) *negotiating learning*

A central principle has lain behind - and run through - the themes of

"getting started" and "defining relevance". This is negotiation. Thus far, a typical "hopes and fears" induction has been portrayed like this:

> *The course begins with activities which are designed to break down barriers between tutors and course members and between course members themselves [...] There then follows a 'hopes and fears' session during which course members and tutors exchange ideas on what the course will be about. The 'hopes and fears' are put on large sheets of paper and pinned on the walls. They will be referred to as the course develops. A programme is arrived at out of the discussion and this is the 'contract'.*
>
> (F.E. *tutor*)

The contract spells out what learning agenda has been agreed upon, how it may be assessed, and what disciplinary procedures and institutional regulations apply. Tutor and trainee sign. Periodic review sessions allow opportunities for staff and course members to evaluate progress and atler goals or methods as appropriate. And all learn happily ever after ...

Such an example of negotiation is deceptively unproblematic. Negotiation can also involve hard bargaining, and is neither easy nor foolproof. For example, negotiation may involve the discussion and acceptance of institutional rules, and of group disciplines, as in this case from the Leven Multiskills Workshop:

1. That all group members would spend roughly the same total time working in each skill area
2. That we would work without formal breaks other than lunch, but have coffee or tea within the room when we wanted it
3. That two Student members of the group would be responsible for collecting the monies for coffee etc.
4. That the room would be returned to a clean and tidy condition at the end of each day
5. That group members would be on first name terms

In the next account a tutor illustrates how negotiation is fostered in the early part of a UVP course, and gives an example of the kinds of problem that arise in a residential setting:

> *On the course, there are a number of games and exercises for practising, sharing, negotiation and compromise. We then move from that to a more realistic situation of - for example - planning the residentials. We share ideas and feelings about what's to be done and how to negotiate a compromise in which neither side has lost and all accept the contract - establish procedures for what happens when contract is broken by either side.*
>
> *For example, on one residential, an agreement was reached that by 1am everyone had to be in the hotel. This was seen to be a reasonable time if the project work was to be done effectively during the day. As part of the development of a trust relationship and letting trainees take responsibility for their own behaviour, the tutors did not check that all trainees were back by 1am. However, after a couple of days it was obvious that some were suffering from lack of sleep. At first all we did was ask whether they thought they were working effectively and if not, why. For some that was enough. However, for some others, it wasn't and the rest of the group began to get disturbed by the trainees consistently breaking the group's own rule. The trainees tried to handle it themselves , got nowhere and eventually asked the tutors to take over.*

They wanted the rule-breakers removed from the scheme as that was the sanction which had been agreed at the outset.

Such an account indicates the disciplining potential of the contract (although it was only partly successful in that instance). Group pressure can augment the tutor's authority. But, again, real dilemmas may emerge, as the same tutor went on to point out:

However in retrospect several other courses of action seem to be equally appropriate and perhaps more effective for the rule breakers. If trainees want to cut someone's hand off for an offence, you know what not to do, but in this case, the decision is more difficult.

The above negotiations concern general course rules and sanctions, but negotiation may also involve difficult individual agreements:

It makes me think back to one of the Training Workshop girls that came in. She'd been banned from about every classroom. She was just notorious and she came into our classroom and right away she came out with all the complaints about, you know "you've got to sit here for an hour and a half and you canna even have a smoke". I said "right, it seems reasonable to me that if yo_ smoke we shouldn't expect you to sit here for an hour and a half. So we negotiated - she could nip out to the toilet for a smoke and then come back in. But only for two minutes. And just so long as she took part in everything that was going on in the class. Worked a treat - we never had any bother with that girl at all because she saw that as being fair. She was giving something. We were giving something.

(F.E. tutor)

In this case, the tutor tries to negotiate a minimal involvement from a learner - as a last resort. Such a strategy is always problematic,

and can lead to further dilemmas - what if the others think it is an unfair privilege? For this tutor, the problem did not arise. On other occasions, it might have. In general, however, individual solutions and agreements can be quite acceptable to - and indeed supported by - the group, provided the principle of negotiation is clearly understood so that issues of "favouring" or "picking on" are less likely to arise:

> *Karen had a violent temper, she'd swear and get physically aggressive. But the group came to accept that that was Karen's problem - and they helped her. They ended up supporting her rather than resenting her outbursts.*
>
> *(F.E. tutor)*

These are relatively successful examples of negotiation, but if general or individual boundaries are not clearly established then the result can be chaos, as in this account of a residential gone wrong:

> *There was a lot of noise so Gillian knocked on the door. When at last it was opened a fruit cake came sailing past and thudded against the wall behind her. She asked what was going on. They said they were only playing football. The first thing the course leader had said on the Monday was 'there will be no alcohol' but he'd also made it fairly plain that he didn't agree with that rule himself. And that was the cast-iron certainty for failure. The end result was that they'd had five of them pissed by lunch-time. They'd had a trainee complaining that he'd been pee'd upon overnight, and then some of the food and clothes had gone missing.*
>
> *(tutor)*

Such outcomes are likely if negotiation becomes abdication.

Negotiation is a form of leadership - "part and parcel of management":

> *Any negotiation is two-sided. They have to negotiate for something and to offer something and that was one-way, where it all goes wrong. There was nothing coming from them in the way of 'if we do this, can we do that?' and similarly there wasn't anything from the tutors' side in terms of, 'if you do this, we'll do that.' It can't just be 'what do you want to do?'*
>
> *(tutor)*

> *Set boundaries and in-between : that's negotiating.*
>
> *(tutor)*

Negotiation can raise problems for learning as well as for relationsips and discipline if it is not carefully handled. It can, for example, lead to a highly conservative curriculum, where the group discussion sounds like this:

> *"Girls should get something different, something they enjoy, no' like politics. There's more men in politics than women."*
>
> Q *"Are women not interested in politics?"*
>
> *"No." (chorus) "We should get something different. The boys should get something and we should get something different." ".. a project or something we enjoy."*
>
> Q *"But Maggie Thatcher's a woman, isn't she?"*
>
> *"I know. She's a diddy woman." "she's about the only one.." "she's like a man".. "I know"*
>
> Q *"You don't think it's got much to do with you?*
>
> *"No. We should get something we enjoy, something we all like doing together in a group."*
>
> Q *"What's that?"*
>
> *"Like nursing." "Yes." "Aye." ".. and fashionable things" [...] "Better than politics any day."*

Does "negotiation" for girls therefore simply lead to nursing or fashion - yet another project on clothes and make-up? One tutor put forward this solution to the dilemma, arguing that although negotiation was fundamental to his practice, he nevertheless held to the social goals of the course. The task was not therefore to play follow-my-learner, but to try to work out from the themes of learner interest towards these goals:

> *Q Your activities in the classroom are governed by what you call your 'hidden agenda'. Could we talk a bit more about it?*
>
> *Yes. My 'hidden agenda' is to do with encouraging a growing community, social and political awareness. That's what I feel young people have to discover, or gain more confidence or skills in [...] Perhaps another way of putting it would be to say that it's to do with generating powerful ideas relating to self, others, groups, and society at large. And that would obviously include the whole area of employment and unemployment, and particularly focussing on unemployment because I think that it's important that they have an understanding of what status they have just now, what transition status they have, and why it's come about. So that they see that they are not primarily responsible for their unemployment.*
>
> (F.E. tutor)

The point about such course goals, whether they are seen as "hidden agenda" or not, is that they are not syllabus starting points. They are targets which can only be reached by taking the learners along with you, and that process can be secured, for example, through what TCR call "formative reviewing":[20]

The initial aim of formative reviewing would be to enable learners to define their wants, their learning objectives within the scope of the sponsor's aims and so to determine the direction and content of learning. Reviewing aims will change as the learning process develops, e.g. it should provide feed-back on specific learning experiences, test the validity of sub-goals and finally produce a Personal Progress Record in terms of:

Where was I when I started?
Where am I now?
How have I got there?
Where could I go from here?
How can I get there?

(Trainee Centred Reviewing, Leeds University Counselling and Careers Development Unit)

But what if the interests of the learner, the tutor, and the sponsor fail to coincide - a commonplace event in YOP schemes. How are the conflicts to be reconciled? Can conflicts over values be "negotiated" away?

Several points need to be made about values and negotiation. First, negotiation will mean different things and imply different values to different tutors. Indeed, it does within this working group. Second, negotiation is basically an educational process. It is founded on participation and consensus. Its intention - more than most educational or training events - is to avoid manipulation, and to avoid the directive and rather sinister approach of "attitude preparation". Third, negotiation is more often than not based on the sorts of principles that several educational projects have previously espoused e.g. Humanities Curriculum Project, or the York University Political Education Research Unit:

. fairness
. freedom
. toleration
. respect for truth
. respect for reasoning

Fourth, the values inherent in negotiation presume the active role of the learner, citizen or worker, the ownership of skills, and the ability and willingness to apply these skills in different contexts. Such participatory, democratic, and critical abilities stress both the autonomy of the individual and the solidarity of the group. That, of course, is not a neutral position. Nor is it the only one that might reasonably be argued.

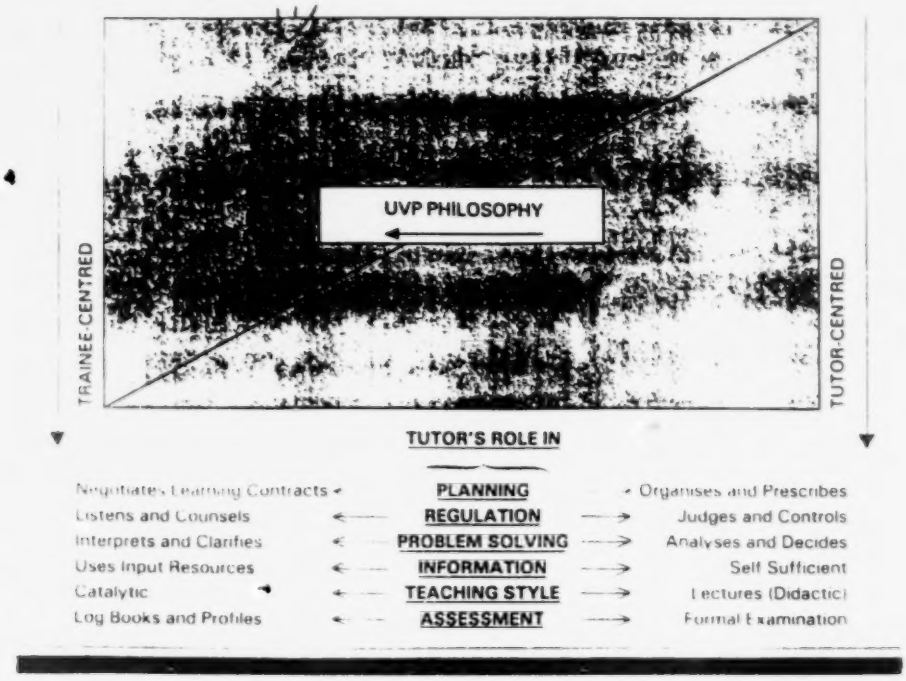
A final point about negotiation. It is the process through which young people can learn to take responsibility for their own learning, and social development. It is, therefore, central to Transition Learning. It ought to me more central to educational practice in a participatory democracy. As Hoetker has put it:[21]

> *We cannot teach critical independence by insisting on the mechanical application of memorised critical formulas. We cannot teach respect for thought by attending only to mechanics and forms of expression. We cannot teach honest self-expression by punishing desagreements with established opinions. We cannot teach students to be free citizens by teaching them as witless ninnies. And, above all, we cannot teach students to honour the common humanity of all men by expressing contempt for the student's own humanity in our every word and gesture.*

E. TUTOR ROLES

This report has tried to outline a set of procedures for Transition Learning. What implications do they have for the role of the teacher? That is the final issue to be discussed in this section.

The role of the tutor is radically changed in relation to conventional school or F.E. practice. But it is not so dramatically different from some of the better YOP or UVP practice. A member of the YTS Development Team, Malcolm Cribb, has recently summed up the UVP tutor role thus:[22]



The focus switches from the performance of teaching to the management of learning. Yet there is more beyond that. The right hand column implies an autonomous, directive teacher - "organise, prescribe, judge, lecture, examine," but the teacher has always had the powers of

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the "trusty" rather than the "governor". He or she has more often been the prisoner of the syllabus. We would argue for greater professional autonomy for teachers, for a more central role in course planning and implementation. And for less syllabus-mongering from above.

Transition Learning implies a teaching role moving from a concern for content to a concern for method, or process. The earlier parts of this section have illustrated what that might mean in terms of relationships between tutor and learner; in the transfer of power to the learner; in giving learners responsibility; in using interpersonal skills in counselling; in the management of reflective learning, and in negotiating curricula and reviewing progress. How different would such a role be?

It might involve many things, such as working with groups like this:

> *They're young travel agents so the projects tend to be something like: 'you've got Australian cousins arriving in Britain in May. They would like to see as much of Europe and Britain as possible. They're a party of 2 adults, 2 children. Organise an itinerary that will take no more than 10 days.' They all go away back to work with that but they have already divided themselves into teams before they split up at the end of that one week block and within that team they have allocated particular tasks like 'you go and investigate all the air travel, you go and investigate the whole thing by coach, you go and do the hotels' etc. At the beginning of the next one-week block they get together, consolidate the information, work out what they've got that's duplicated, work out the best itinerary, best form of travel in their opinion. Select someone who's going to present it to the rest of the group and once it's presented they then have a discussion as to which team has*

produced the most appropriate itinerary for that particular family or group of travellers. You comment on, but don't assess their answers - only their performance.

(UVP scheme)

Or managing learning like this:

For example, 3 kids decided that a priority for them one week was to find out about supplementary benefit as it applied to them. If you offered that to the whole group, some people would be happy to say 'well, look, I just want the information' and others would say that they would take responsibility for gathering the information. So the 3 decided that they would get all the information, get it on to 2 sides of A4, run it off, and give it to everybody else. And they'd also do a stand-up chat. There was no need for everyone in our group to all be doing the same thing because they all wanted something different from it. One did nothing but lay-out in the end. One did most of the phoning and zooming about picking up pamphlets, and she and another bloke actually sat down and took all the most important points out of it. So that they end up with 2 sides that explain the situation on supplementary benefit for school leavers.

(teacher)

Or using learning opportunities like this:[23]

The most effective way of getting to grips with issues in social education is not always by focussing directly on these issues. What might be called 'defocussed' work seems often to be more successful, that is, where issues arise incidentally and spontaneously as a by-product of other activities being undertaken.

(Scottish Social Education Project)

In terms of assessment and course evaluation, the role might involve undertaking what the Tavistock Institute call a "learning audit" - in other words a systematic course evaluation:[24]

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For example:

What arrangements are made to encourage young people to talk about, and make sense of what is happening to them in their work?

What methods are used for recording the young people's activities and achievements?

How are young people involved in reviewing and recording their own progress?

How often are their learning programmes reviewed and updated?

What records of what has been done on the scheme are given to the young people when they leave?

And that might involve the pupils' or trainees' opinions of their own performance and of the nature of the course:

COURSE ASSESSMENT Module LISTENING date .....

Please circle the number that describes most accurately what you think your answer should be.

7 = excellent, 4 = average, 1 = very poor.

How interesting was this part of the course?	7	6	(5)	4	3	2	1
How useful is this module?	7	(6)	5	4	3	2	1
How do you rate the methods used?	7	6	(5)	4	3	2	1
My performance would rate	7	6	5	4	(3)	2	1
My groups performance would rate	7	6	5	(4)	3	2	1
The best person in our group would rate	7	6	(5)	4	3	2	1
The worst person in our group would rate	7	6	5	4	3	2	(1)
The teaching of this module was	7	6	5	(4)	3	2	1

33.

Signed: .....

A form of profiling which might fit Transition Learning is being explored by the Renfrew Experience-Based Learning Project. A learning register is being developed within which learner competencies may be recorded by the teacher in such a way that skill transferability and motivation will be encouraged. The learning register allows

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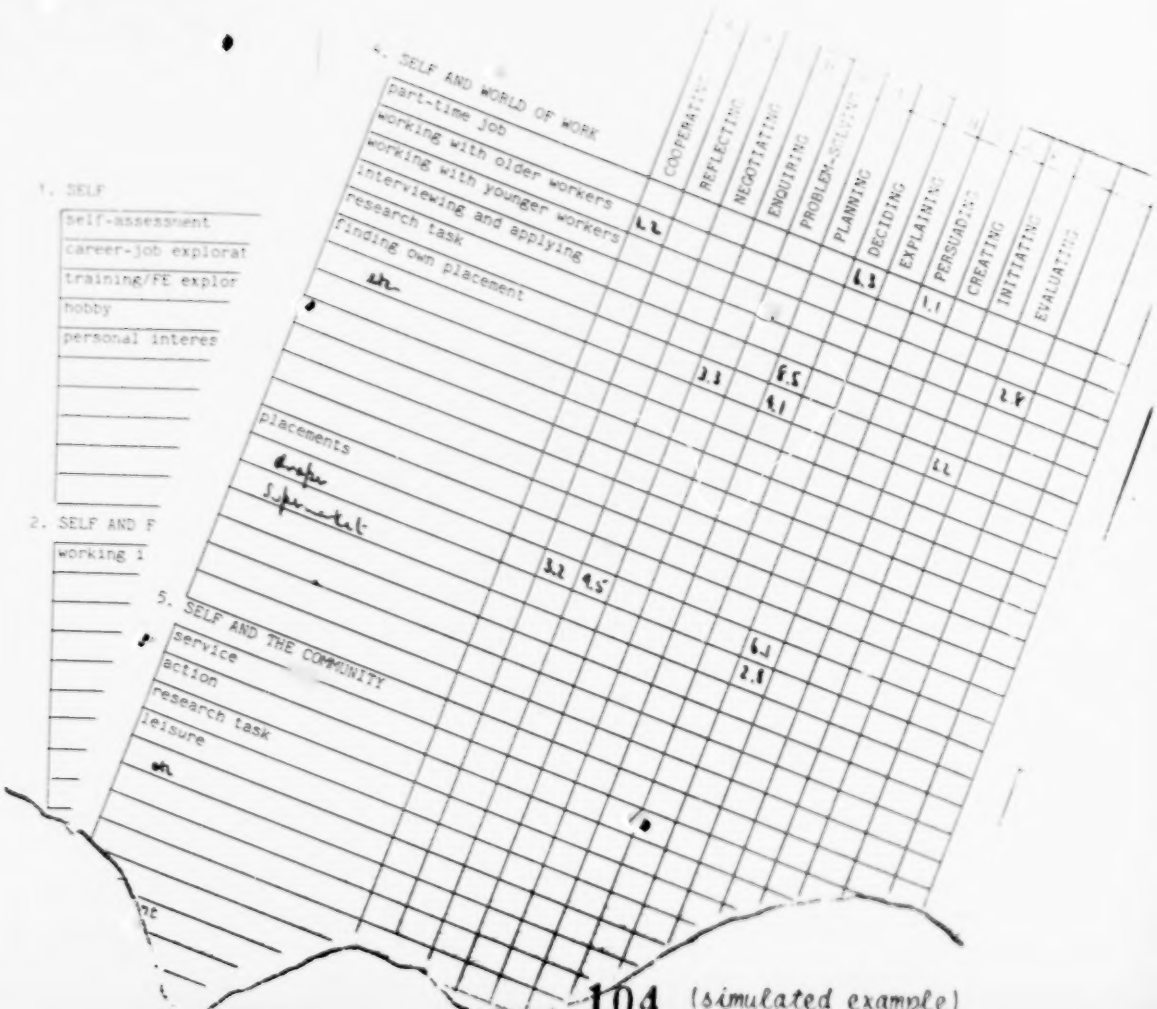
the tutor to record prior learning, negotiate targets, and diagnose strengths, weaknesses, and omissions in the learner's progress. It gives the learner a continuous record of his or her progress. The register draws on lists of competencies required by national certification (in this case the Scottish Certificate in Vocational Studies) but also encourages the recording of additional competencies by the teacher. Such a learning register may help the teacher adopt an informed counselling role, and enable better control of work-based learning.[25]



 (simulated example)

Alternatively, the tutor may encourage students to report on their work in this way:[26]

SIX WEEKS EVALUATION/SEMESTER

NAME Sue Schneider

DATE May 15, 1979

1. What materials, books, movies, etc., have you used this six weeks?
   Blue Collar — "The changing Region" (movie)
   newspaper — literature from S.R.C.
   U.S. History Text
2. What activities have you used to achieve your objectives and goals?
   Read Blue Collar – wrote follow up paper
   Interviewed Mr. Brown at SRC in Wash. D.C.
   Read article on Salt II, attended seminar, wrote paper,
   visited State capital
3. What activities did you fail to complete on this contract? none

4. Did you work to your full potential, all things considered? yes

5. Was this contract—
   too much work ____ not enough work ____ adequate work ✓

6. Please fill in the following information
   1st six weeks grade ____ 3rd six weeks grade ____
   2nd six weeks grade ____ semester grade ____

7. Explain why you feel you deserve the grade you have given yourself for the 3rd six weeks (be sure to return all written materials you have produced so I can have them to use in evaluating your work).
   I worked hard this 6 weeks and completed everything I contracted to do. I now read the paper every day, which is something I did not do before this six weeks. I have a basic understanding of labor and labor unions. This stems from the reading I did this six weeks. I completed my general goals thoroughly.

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Are such schemes feasible? Can learners be trusted? A U.S. project offered the following comment which seems to square with the working group's experiences:[27]

> *Teachers ask each of their students, "what grade do you think you deserve?" Students are asked to evaluate their performance based on contract fulfillment. This is as difficult for many students due to the transfer of ownership and responsibility. In most school situations students are rarely asked to assess their own performance. Staff members find students to be amazingly accurate in assessing their strengths and weaknesses.*
>
> *Statements like "I could have done it, but I just kept putting it off" or "I really blew it this six weeks" demonstrate students' ability to accept responsibility for failure instead of transferring the blame to others or circumstances. Conversely, when a student is successful, he/she can take ownership and feel a sense of contribution and a personal pride in achievements.*
>
> *(Learning Unlimited)*

Finally, there are 4 general points to make concerning the role of the tutor.

First, such a role involves the decline of the subject expert, and that is an uncomfortable and vulnerable transformation:

> *The first time a kid says to you 'how do you do that? and you say 'I don't know' the look on their face is quite .. you know, especially in schools. It's almost: "I'm sorry I've asked you a question you don't know.*
>
> *(school teacher)*

But it also involves an increased professionalism and a greater sense of involvement, especially in terms of learning/teaching methods.

> *For example, a group of FE lecturers set up a support group as a result of an interpersonal skills course. They met quite frequently at first to give each other support, and to explore the significance of the new methods. The shared course experience became the focus of continued staff development. The meetings gave time to reflect on their practices and a place where it was safe to admit difficulties and problems.*
>
> (F.E. lecturer)

Second, the role implies being part of the learning process, and not separate from it:

> *the right people .. who can be part of the course and integrate with the course rather than be seen to be running the course*
>
> (UVP employer)

Such a role is described in this US project as the "teacher-participant":[28]

> *How is the role of the teacher-participant changed? Doesn't the program make extra demands of the teacher?*
>
> *The role of the teacher is changed drastically. The nature of the program demands that teachers become not only instructors and test-graders, but facilitators, coordinators, counsellors and administrators. The student-teacher relationship becomes very personal and may involve social-emotional areas in addition to academic concerns. Program teachers are involved with community contracts and learning activities outside school hours. When making public presentations to educators, the program director has often been*

confronted with the following comment "Any educational program would be successful with that kind of commitment from staff." This issue is one that has some implications for the total school program. How can school administrators create a climate that encourages continuing professional growth, commitment, and involvement from staff? The program not only requires staff to give off their own time regularly for student activities, but they must also learn new professional skills not usually required in a traditional teaching role. Program participants have generally concluded that the demands are greater but the rewards are greater also.

(Learning Unlimited)

That leads us to the third point. Can anyone do this? How special do you have to be? The group certainly feel that many of the necessary skills can be acquired, but that does not mean that anyone can do it.

That's my fear about all this. We can say we're doing this or that, but an awful lot happens because of the personality that's in front of the group. If someone thinks they can pick it up and say 'oh good, we just ask them what they want to do... I mean, they could have a riot on their hands..

(F.E. tutor)

Certainly, however, it does not limit such roles to the charismatic exceptions. And that takes in the final point. How realistic is all this? We would stress that it already <u>is</u> happening, that such roles and methods have already been tried and developed in the area of "vocational preparation"- largely in a piecemeal fashion - since the beginning of UVP in 1976 and YOP in 1978. Elsewhere, such styles of learning are already a growing influence, as in Community Education. Elements of the Scottish Certificate in Sixth Year Studies reveal similar patterns of individualized

learning, with teachers playing something of the role of facilitators. Within the area of school-to-work projects, the Schools Council Industry Project (SCIP), and numerous YOP-based initiatives, have developed the role of facilitator and counsellor. The fragments of such tutor roles are therefore lying all around, and systematic development and dissemination await only administrative support.

To sum up: this final section has tried to show how Transition Learning can be promoted through staff and course development. It has also tried to stress learner-centred procedures. These include: giving responsibility to the learner, developing active learning, negotiation, counselling and interpersonal skills development, the effective management of work-based learning, and the promotion of better teacher/learner relationships. Together they can act as a vehicle to advance technical and social learning: they can assist the development of greater personal autonomy and social development, as well as producing a better-trained and technically more sophisticated work-force. Finally, it should not be thought that such procedures represent the bizarre idealism of an education system determined to ignore the pragmatics of productivity or profit. Some of the procedures outlined here have much in common with more modern forms of management, variously prescribed under the "sociotechnic" or "Quality of Working Life" banners.[29]

Evaluation questions

In your course:

1. What influence do learners have over the content, goals and methods?
2. How much testing as opposed to negotiating does your induction involve? How much negotiation is possible or desirable in this phase?
3. What elements of course methods contribute to:
   - the confidence of the learners and building relationships?
   - local relevance?
   - using young people's own experiences?
   - flexible reaction to learning opportunities?
   - the personal involvement of the learners in the course?
   - active ways of learning?
   - effective negotiation?
4. What kinds of role do tutors play? what changes are possible and desirable?

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6. CONCLUSION

This report was produced by a working group of practitioners and developers. The report seeks to reappraise "vocational preparation" and to suggest practical ways in which educators and trainers can better respond to the problems of the 1980s.

The working group met 10 times between April 1982 and April 1983 and was unable, therefore, to do more than sketch out criticisms and proposals. This was a serious constraint. It was made more acute by the group's awareness that the problems of "vocational preparation" are the problems of formal education and that big problems require big solutions. We also felt that our task was urgent - that the government's response to the economic crisis and to mass youth unemployment was making urgent and novel demands on our education and training system. Our conclusions were:

1. We advocate Transition Learning for all ability groups. By Transition Learning we mean a core of learning methods which promote both educational and social development. Such a core involves active learning, negotiation, counselling, and new tutor roles. Transition Learning therefore involves helping young people to become citizens, workers and adults by combining educational activities and social contexts in order to give individuals or groups the experience, knowledge and responsibility that will help them make successful changes in status. For learners and tutors it involves the challenge of greater responsibility. For administrators, the challenge of greater delegation.

2. We feel compelled to make this broad reinterpretation of "vocational preparation" by the nature and depth of the economic and manpower crises facing the UK in the 1980s, and their profound educational and training implications.

(i) The effects of these crises on the transition from school to work are great. Whole ways of becoming adult are disappearing, as "work" collapses or radically alters for the 16-18 age group. And we have yet to consider the 18+ problem.

(ii) There is a further educational crisis, endemic to the educational systems of the UK. That crisis involves elitism, and a neglect of the majority. It has also been - and there are a few signs of change here - an anti-vocational, subject-based elitism centred on university definitions of relevance. For many of our pupils, therefore, the schools advance the 3Ds - disqualification, discouragement, and dependence.

(iii) "Vocational Preparation" has never been much more than vague occupational training for the "less able" - a carrot for the donkeys. The need to develop entrepreneurial skills is barely acknowledged.

(iv) The need to involve all of the "ability" range has been denied in the past. The need to promote less passive forms of education and training and to counter-balance the cognitive onesidedness and didactic sterility of formal education is periodically invoked, and then neglected. As a result the passivity and dependence that contradict Transition Learning goals remain entrenched.

(v) Changes in the labour market, in technology, and in society have made the preparatory rationale of "vocational preparation"

obsolete. It is widely acknowledged that we need a more relevant rationale for the 1980s, based on personal development and social solidarity. Many rationales for "vocational preparation" have begun this process of redefinition that Transition Learning expresses.

3. Despite all these problems, there is hope for change. New initiatives have emerged in the last few years from MSC sponsored courses and researches. Competition between MSC and the national education departments in the area of innovation has created a more open market place for educational and training ideas and practices. There is now a pressing need to recognise that radical changes are necessary, and to create a framework and a rationale for a coherent and purposeful transition process in the interests of a more productive and democratic future for our young people.